



**GEORGE ROGERS
CLARK
Lockridge**







George Rogers Clark, conqueror of the Old Northwest. This statue, which represents Clark as a young frontiersman, was made by Elsie Ward for exhibition at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904. Courtesy of *The Mentor*.

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK

*PIONEER HERO OF THE
OLD NORTHWEST*

BY ROSS F. LOCKRIDGE

AUTHOR OF
HOW GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS
IN INDIANA

ILLUSTRATED



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For what he achieved in the short space of five years in his early twenties, we honor George Rogers Clark, pioneer, soldier, and patriot, who with dauntless heroism in the days of the Revolution won for the young nation the vast and splendid region of the Old Northwest. In Kentucky, Illinois, Ohio, and Indiana he did such deeds as stir the imagination. His story, long neglected, comes with the surprise of new discovery. As the true history of a great leader in pioneer and frontier life, as well as in military achievements, this is, we believe, an important book for Americans, young and old, to read



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TO MY SON

ROSS FRANKLIN LOCKRIDGE, JR.

WHOSE BOYISH REGARD

FOR GENUINE HEROES OF HISTORY

HAS HELPED TO INSPIRE THIS BOOK

IT IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to recite in brief and readable form the tale of a genuine American hero. It seeks to depict the life and career of George Rogers Clark as he stalked on the most dramatic stage of American history, like a champion of a new freedom. It aims to reflect the significant historical relations of which he was so vital a part.

To accomplish this, the sources of information have been thoroughly canvassed and every possible suggestion has been sought. The author feels deeply indebted to a wide range of material and to a large number of persons who have made helpful suggestions. All accounts of the career of Clark and the comments upon his life, including many from miscellaneous sources, have been carefully studied.

The primary source has been Clark's own letters, memoirs, and diary, which have been used without stint and with confidence that we have authentic documents in whatever George Rogers Clark wrote about the enterprises in which he engaged. Notwithstanding the varying length of time elapsing between these different written records — his diary, his report to Patrick Henry, his official letter to Thomas Jefferson, his notable personal letter to George Mason, his letter to Dr. Samuel Brown, his later memoirs, and his miscellaneous letters — the discrepancies among them are trivial and inconsequential. In the opinion of the author, these writings are in fact — as Thomas Jefferson hoped they would be when he urged Clark to write his memoirs — “valuable morsels of history” and “justify to the world those who have told them how great he was.” They reflect perfectly not only the doings of Clark but the purposes with which he was inspired and the spirit

in which he acted. All that Clark said correlates in a striking manner with what Clark did. Therefore, nearly everything in the book that pertains to his own conduct and achievement is taken directly from his writings, though often without quotation or reference.

Clark's memoirs and other writings are found in several publications, notably in M. M. Quaife's *The Conquest of the Illinois* and in Volumes VIII and XIX of the *Illinois Historical Collections*. They are quoted almost in their entirety in W. H. English's *Conquest of the Northwest and Life of General George Rogers Clark* and in large excerpts in Temple Bodley's *George Rogers Clark, His Life and Public Services*. Many valuable quotations are found in C. W. Butterfield's *George Rogers Clark's Conquest of the Illinois*, which also quotes freely from British official records. Information on important collateral matters is to be found in the Kaskaskia and Cahokia Records edited by C. W. Alvord for the *Illinois Historical Collections*. The letters and journal of Major Joseph Bowman corroborate Clark's writings in an interesting way.

The author desires to acknowledge special indebtedness, for helpful material and suggestions, to these books and also to Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia*, Theodore Roosevelt's *The Winning of the West*, Judge John Law's *History of Vincennes*, and to Logan Esarey's *History of Indiana*, which furnished valuable material regarding the effect of Clark's conquest on the suppression of the Indian menace during the Revolution.

The research of William H. English, culminating in his splendid two-volume publication, stands as a great public service. The recent book of Temple Bodley presents new-found material from intimate sources and throws a personal light upon the career of this distinguished

hero. To these two writers, the author expresses great obligation.

The courteous aid of R. C. Ballard Thruston of Louisville Kentucky, in giving the use of his magnificent library, is gratefully acknowledged; also the sympathetic and encouraging attitude of all the members of the George Rogers Clark Memorial Commission. The personal help of Dr. Christopher B. Coleman and Dr. James A. Woodburn and also of Esther U. McNitt of the Indiana State Library has been particularly valuable.

Needless to say, in assuming to reflect the heroic accomplishments of one of the distinctive characters in American history, the author feels a deep sense of responsibility. He can only hope that the dauntless spirit of George Rogers Clark and his associates may pass through these pages into the souls of those who read of their great deeds.

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Certain landmarks need to be kept in view in the history of the Old Northwest — that Middle-West region now comprising the rich states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan. These landmarks all hang together, each dependent on the one going before, as the following paragraphs indicate.

In 1759 Wolfe's victory redeemed the soil from French absolutism. The battle on the Plains of Abraham, where both Wolfe and Montcalm were slain, was one of the dramatic events in American history. On the night before the battle, as Wolfe and his men with muffled oars were rowing down the St. Lawrence, the young commander was heard repeating to himself the lines of Gray's *Elegy*, so lately from the press, —

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

The path of glory led Wolfe to his grave that night, but it also led England to empire in America.

In 1763, by the Treaty of Paris following the Seven Years' War, diplomacy ratified the conquest of Wolfe. America became English. French power departed from the continent. France had been holding America by its two ends, the mouths of its great rivers. But now La Salle's dream of French empire on the Mississippi passed away forever. Hereafter English law, English political ideas, English institutions, language, and customs, were to dominate the land back to the Mississippi from the Lakes to the Gulf. The English colonies in America were the beneficiaries of that conquest and the way was opened for their westward expansion.

In 1774 England, by the Quebec Act, proposed to

extend Canada to the Ohio River, under the laws and institutions which the English Parliament had recognized for Quebec. This was resented by the colonies on the seaboard. They had claims to the West and anticipations of expansion.

In 1778 and 1779 the inclusion of the Northwest into the Province of Canada was prevented by the famous expedition of George Rogers Clark to Kaskaskia and Vincennes, the story of which has been so clearly and forcibly told by Mr. Lockridge in this volume. This is the central landmark of the history of the Old Northwest. It is well to have this dramatic story brought to the attention of the young people of America, and their fathers and mothers as well, so that they may know by what sacrifices and brave endeavors came their heritage.

In 1782-83, again at Paris, the diplomacy of Franklin, Adams, and Jay confirmed the conquest of Clark and his men. As Mr. Lockridge has pointed out, "possession is nine points of the law" and because of what Clark had done the American boundary on the Mississippi was finally obtained. When it came to the battle of diplomatic wits, the Americans overtopped their opponents, and they were ready to take advantage of British leniency toward them, which arose from the rivalry existing between the ambitions of France and Spain on the one side and of Great Britain upon the other. Great Britain was ready to concede generous bounds to the Americans and thus erect a western rival to Spain for territorial control in America. With the Spanish-American War the last vestige of Spanish control disappeared. Following the obtaining of the Mississippi as our western boundary, the expansion of the United States to include Louisiana, Oregon, California, and the Mexican cessions came in the course of time. It

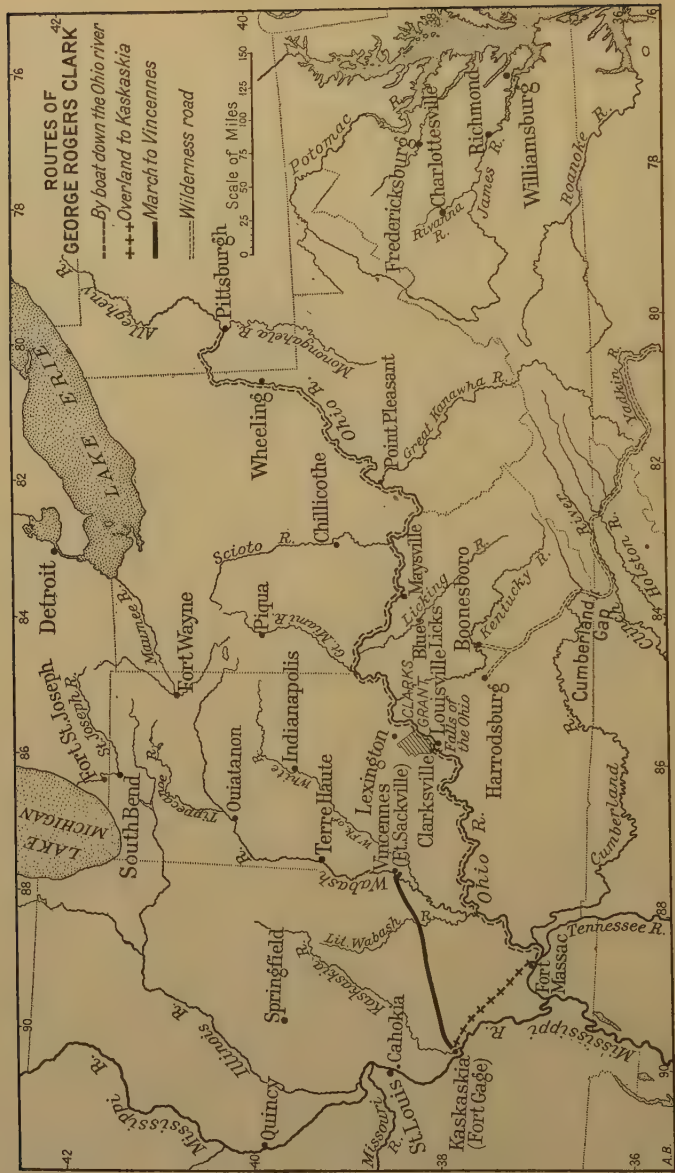
was all due largely to the original conquest of George Rogers Clark.

The last landmark in the history of the Old Northwest was the greatest of all. Civil law follows the conquest of arms. In America the military has always been subordinate to the civil arm, and we have faith to believe that it will always be so. The consummation of all the efforts that went before is found in the immortal Ordinance of 1787, to which Mr. Lockridge refers. The states ceded to the United States their claims to the Northwest, and the Congress of a weak and expiring Confederacy passed the Ordinance for the government of the great region which Clark's expedition had been instrumental in securing for his country. This Ordinance contained the principles and forms for the government of the Territory. These principles and forms became the precedent for all subsequent organizations of American territories. The Ordinance contained, also, a compact between Congress on the one hand and the prospective settlers in the Northwest on the other. This compact guaranteed free soil, free schools, a free church in a free state, together with the bases of civil liberty. For these reasons, as Daniel Webster says, this act deserves to be remembered "as long as the Ohio River shall flow." As Mr. Lockridge's volume shows, in reading of the achievement of George Rogers Clark, we cannot fail to pay tribute to this great achievement in legislation.

Mr. Lockridge's story is enlivening and interesting. When one considers the story he has to tell, one can appreciate his disposition to emphasize the dramatic, romantic, and heroic aspects of his subject. He indulges in some tradition and unverified reports, but he gives them exactly for what they are, while he shows a very full

knowledge of his subject and a conscientious desire to make his biography true to history.

History and biography are all the better if they are made lively and engaging. Mr. Lockridge has the faculty of doing this in his writing. He properly appreciates the factor of imagination, while he prevents the images which he pictures from belying the facts. As we approach the memorial celebration of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Clark's achievement, it is very fortunate that such a book as this by Mr. Lockridge is offered to the reading public.



Virginia and the region northwest of the Ohio River which was the scene of George Rogers Clark's principal exploits.

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK

CHAPTER ONE

IN OLD VIRGINIA

THE pioneer hero of the Old Northwest reflects the luster of the Old Dominion. The life and career of George Rogers Clark embody all that Virginia was as the first American colony and all that she became as one of the first great American commonwealths.

He has close spiritual kinship with all those gallant Virginia figures that passed before him and moved with him. Captain John Smith, heroically saving that first little colony on the James River in 1607 by adroit management of the Indians and by leadership of a handful of men in the wilderness, was a prototype of George Rogers Clark on the Wabash in 1779.

It was Clark who, more than all the other masterful warriors and statesmen of Virginia, gave definition and meaning to the generous grant of James I in 1609, whereby he extended Virginia's dominion two hundred miles north and two hundred miles south of Old Point Comfort, and "up into the land throughout from sea to sea, west and northwest." Clark established Virginia's claim that the northwest line started from the upper or northern limit of the grant and therefore included all that splendid region between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi—the drainage basin of the Great Lakes and the beautiful valleys of the Ohio and the Wabash. Thus

Virginia became indeed the "mother of states and statesmen," for it was from these lands, owned or claimed by her and conquered by George Rogers Clark, that many great states were formed.

Virginia was the mother of the Revolution. In the Stamp Act speech of Patrick Henry, and the resolution of the colonial Assembly against the right of Great Britain to lay taxes on the colonies, "Virginia gave the signal to the continent."

Virginia's Revolutionary trio — Patrick Henry, the orator who aroused the colonists to fight for their rights; Thomas Jefferson, the inspired thinker and writer; and George Washington, wielder of the mighty sword and shield — have won lasting glory. But for years due credit was not given to that younger son, George Rogers Clark, for his part in the struggle. Yet in him were combined many of the traits of these other illustrious Virginians of his time. In him was the fiery soul of Henry, the lofty vision of Jefferson, and the heroic valor of Washington. While the three older men were striving to win liberty for the settlers along the seacoast, Clark was extending the claims of the colonies to territory in the Northwest. It was largely through his efforts that the power of foreign countries was broken in the lands west of the original thirteen states.

George Rogers Clark was born in Virginia, November 19, 1752. His birthplace was a four-hundred-acre plantation on the Rivanna River in Albemarle County. His father's estate was about a mile and a half north of Monticello, the home of Thomas



At one of Thomas Jefferson's birthday parties, which Clark may have attended, the guests danced the minuet, while Jefferson himself played the violin. The scene was reproduced on the lawn at Monticello, not long ago, by students and members of the faculty of the University of Virginia. Photograph by courtesy of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

Jefferson. Jefferson was born nine years earlier at Shadwell, a short distance from Monticello.

This region was a sparsely settled frontier at that time. The Jefferson and Clark families were close and intimate neighbors, and although there were nine years between the ages of Thomas and George, they had a friendly acquaintance in boyhood. This youthful attachment ripened into a friendship which lasted throughout the lifetime of these famous men.

It is a striking coincidence that Clark and Jefferson, who were to be the principal instruments in

extending America's domain far into the West, should have been born so near together in time and place. This section of Virginia, the birthplace of Jefferson and Clark, was destined to hold a memorable place in history. Albemarle County is now a beautiful site adorned by the estate of Monticello and the University of Virginia.

Clark was born within clear sight of the Blue Ridge Mountains, which were twelve miles farther west. These beautiful mountains have long furnished a picturesque setting for song and story. But in Clark's youth, the middle of the eighteenth century, they had an entirely different meaning. They then formed a frontier wall between Old Virginia and the wild unknown West of the Indians. Beyond the Blue Ridge was unbroken forest — almost a trackless wilderness. In his boyhood Clark must have frequently gazed at these mountains and wondered what adventures lay beyond them. Perhaps even then he planned to cross them and explore the country about which he heard many tales.

Shortly before the birth of George Rogers Clark, the young surveyor, George Washington, began making surveys across the Blue Ridge Mountains. He penetrated the wilderness as far as the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, the beginning of the Ohio, which he believed was an important spot because it might become the gateway of the West. It was in 1754, two years after Clark's birth, that the British invasion of the French and Indian country was effectively begun. It was then

that the British first undertook to fortify the strategic point where Pittsburgh now stands at the head of the Ohio River.

Clark's people were well-to-do Virginia planters from the old tidewater county of King-and-Queen. In 1757 they moved from the Rivanna River to a much larger estate in Caroline County. Here they had more neighbors and better advantages for the children. Here the boy, George Rogers, attended a famous school conducted by a Scotch educator, Mr. Donald Robertson, who was a graduate of the University of Edinburgh. James Madison was one of his classmates in this school. Clark was good in mathematics, expert in surveying, and deeply interested in geography, history, and nature study.

His study of nature continued throughout life. In his lonely old age he was visited in his cabin at Clarksville, Indiana, by John James Audubon, who wrote many books on birds. Audubon came to consult Clark concerning the wild life of this region and especially the wild birds. He referred to Clark in his notes as an authority on this subject. Throughout the lifelong correspondence between Clark and Thomas Jefferson, who also was a student of natural history, there are comments and information upon different phases of nature.

Clark's youthful training was greatly influenced by George Mason, an eminent Virginian of that day. Mason lived at Gunston Hall in the adjoining county of Stafford (now Fairfax County). There was much visiting between the families, and the

master of Gunston Hall devoted many hours, day after day, to instructive conversation with the ambitious youth. Clark always regarded Mason with affection and esteem and considered him one of the most valued mentors of his boyhood days. His first comprehensive report of his great successes was a long personal letter to George Mason, which began with this significant paragraph :

Continue to favor me with your valuable lessons — continue your reprimands as though I was your son — when suspicious, think not that promotion, or conferred honor, will occasion any unnecessary pride in me. You have infused too many of your valuable precepts in me to be guilty of the like, or to show any indifference to those that ought to be dear to me. It is with pleasure that I obey in transmitting to you a short sketch of my enterprise and proceeding in the Illinois, as near as I can recollect, or gather from memorandums.

The elder Clarks were deeply religious — devout and active Episcopalians. They had great concern for the spiritual welfare of all their children. A spirit of reverence was imparted to the youthful George Rogers, and throughout his stormy career he clung to the abiding faith which he had received through the precepts of his childhood home.

There were six boys and four girls in the Clark family. Five of the boys achieved distinction as officers of the American Revolution. Jonathan and George Rogers were generals ; John was a captain, and Richard and Edmund were lieutenants. William, the youngest, was too young for service in the



A scene such as George Rogers Clark often witnessed during his youth in Virginia. Slaves have brought an oxcart full of produce to town; and a "long hunter," just returned with a pack of skins, is stopping to chat with another hunter, who is about to leave for the West. From the motion picture, "America." Courtesy of D. W. Griffith, Incorporated.

Revolution. It was this young brother William, who, along with Meriwether Lewis, won fame in the Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Pacific Northwest, commissioned by President Jefferson in 1803. Later in life William Clark was the first governor of Missouri.

We know little of the boyhood days of George Rogers Clark, but the general conditions of living which surrounded him in Old Virginia are well known. Fredericksburg was a center of politics, commerce, and culture. This was the era of the

French and Indian War, before the colonists had begun to think of freedom. There was much visiting and corresponding among neighbors and friends. There was a great deal of outdoor life, which involved the sports that were wholesome and vigorous. Young George Rogers took part in all of these activities. Early in his school days he was a leader among the boys and was frequently called upon to settle disputes for them. Strong and athletic, a lover of games and contests, he was a champion in hardy outdoor sports.

In addition to the ideals which were instilled into the mind and heart of George Rogers Clark, practical training in everyday self-reliance was given him by his father. From his fifteenth year he was required to support himself from the proceeds of crops of corn and tobacco, which he had to cultivate and for which he was held to a strict accounting.

Thus Clark grew to manhood and absorbed much of the spirit of Old Virginia at its best. He represented the heritage of the Cavaliers. From his environment he drew a strain of self-reliance, patriotism, and daring exertion, which, together with intelligence and training, laid the basis of his brilliant career.

CHAPTER TWO

WESTWARD HO!

THE process of western expansion began as soon as settlements were firmly established along the Atlantic coast. Always the more daring among the young pioneers were looking toward the West. In Clark's day, the West lay just beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. To this region, early in 1772, when only nineteen years of age, young Clark went to make a future for himself. Equipped with his surveyor's instruments, he followed the route to Pittsburgh which George Washington, also a young surveyor, had taken twenty years earlier. At the time of Clark's trip, Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh) was the principal frontier point in this region, which was being opened to settlement under British control as a result of the French and Indian War.

From Pittsburgh Clark went down the Ohio and settled on a fine piece of river-bottom land about forty miles below the present site of Wheeling. Here he spent most of the time for two years, hunting, fishing, and surveying. He wrote home: "I had an offer of a very considerable sum for my place. I get a good deal of cash by surveying on this river."

Clark loved adventure for its own sake; also he possessed a keen practical sense and a knowledge of mathematics, which helped to make him a skillful surveyor. His services were much in demand among the incoming settlers. With ax and rifle, chain and compass, he had the schooling which fitted him to

become a pioneer leader. He was indeed a typical pioneer in that robust era.

The great tide of emigration in 1773-74 carried settlers from Virginia and Pennsylvania far down the Ohio and up the Kentucky River to the fertile blue-grass region. From settlements farther south, they went north and westward to the headwaters of the Tennessee River, to the lands known as the Holston region. This incoming of the whites quickly resulted in Indian troubles, for the natives resented encroachment on their territory. The restless wandering Shawnees, who really owned no lands but claimed all, began serious uprisings, which threatened the new pioneer settlements, even those in the better protected region of Pittsburgh. Clark planned a pioneering expedition into Kentucky in the latter part of 1773, but he was delayed by the Indian uprisings.

Lord Dunmore, who was the last royal governor of Virginia, took prompt action to protect these adventurous colonists. The conflict which followed, from May to November, 1774, is known as Lord Dunmore's War.

When the conflict broke out, Lord Dunmore dispatched Daniel Boone and Michael Stoner to pilot back to the safety of Virginia some surveyors whom he had previously sent into Kentucky. These two hardy scouts made the round trip of eight hundred miles in sixty-four days. All the hunters and settlers, as well as the surveying parties, quickly left this dangerous territory, so that before the end of 1774 there

were few, if any, whites left in Kentucky or middle Tennessee. Harrodsburg, the first permanent settlement in Kentucky, was temporarily abandoned.

At the beginning of these troubles, Clark served for a while in the capacity of a special scout, along with Simon Girty and Simon Kenton. Kenton was one of the ablest men of this pioneer country. Girty, though at that time a trusted scout, later became a renegade and a leader of Indian atrocities.

On May 14, 1774, the royal governor appointed George Rogers Clark captain of the "Militia of Pittsburgh and its Dependencies." That Clark, rather than one of the older scouts, was chosen as captain was early recognition of his ability as a leader. He took part in two short expeditions against the Shawnees, known as Cresap's War and McDonald's Expedition.

Cresap's War brought into history a famous Indian, Logan, the noble Mingo chief — "friend of



Pittsburgh, toward the close of the eighteenth century. From an old copperplate engraving. Courtesy of Carnegie Institute.

the white man." During the preceding two years, while surveying lands along the Ohio River, Clark had become well acquainted with Logan and had often visited his cabin. When the uprisings were threatening, a company of border ruffians, acting without authority under the leadership of an unscrupulous trader, attacked the family of Logan in his absence and killed all his near relatives. This aroused the hitherto friendly Indian chief to a point of frenzy. He raised the war hatchet with the declaration that "he would not ground it until he had taken ten lives for one."

Logan thought that Colonel Cresap had done this dastardly deed. He had good reasons for so thinking, as Cresap's force had recently attacked a Shawnee party. On that same raid some of the men had wanted to attack Logan's camp, but friends of Logan, among them Clark, had persuaded the men not to do so. The angry chief, however, always held Cresap responsible for the murder of his family. Soon afterward Logan saved a white prisoner from torture and compelled him to write with gunpowder ink a note which the Indian dictated as follows :

CAPTAIN CRESAP :

What did you kill my people on Yellow Creek for? The white people killed my kin at Conestoga, a great while ago, and I thought nothing of that. But you killed my kin again on Yellow Creek, and took my cousin prisoner. Then I thought I must kill too; and I have been three times to war since; but the Indians are not angry, only myself.

July 21, 1774

CAPTAIN JOHN LOGAN



Daniel Boone as he was represented in the motion picture, "In the Days of Daniel Boone." There is no portrait of Boone as a young man. Courtesy of Universal Pictures Corporation.

This somewhat pathetic note was found tied to a war club in a settler's house after Logan's next expedition. The entire family had been murdered. The Indian chief continued his ravages until he had collected a gory belt of thirty scalps and had taken many prisoners. After this he "grounded his hatchet," saying that he was satisfied.

The larger actions of the war followed swiftly. Lord Dunmore organized his army into two divisions. General Andrew Lewis with eleven hundred men went down the Ohio to the mouth of the Great Kanawha and camped at Point Pleasant. Dunmore himself, under whom Clark was a captain, marched with his forces toward the Shawnee town of Chilli-cothe on the Scioto River, where Lewis's troops were to join him later.

This brings into prominence another renowned Indian — Cornstalk, the Shawnee chief, who on this occasion displayed a flash of genius worthy of his last and greatest successor, Tecumseh. On the morning of October 10, 1774, with only about six hundred warriors, he surrounded the camp of General Lewis. The troops, surprised by the sudden and savage attack, fought for their lives. The generalship of Cornstalk was the outstanding feature of this hotly contested battle. He was always in the thickest of the fray. Some of the soldiers at the most dangerous front heard his powerful voice exhorting above the din: "Be strong! Be strong! Lie close! Shoot well!"

During the battle the Indians killed seventeen officers, including two colonels and four captains, and seventy-five soldiers. Over a hundred of the whites were wounded. The fight raged throughout the day. When night came, Cornstalk's heart was still resolute for fighting to the bitter end. But the spirit of his warriors was broken, and though he harangued them eloquently, he could not persuade them to fight again.

So under cover of darkness the chief withdrew his forces across the Ohio, carrying all of his braves who were wounded and most of those who were dead. Among the dead was the father of Tecumseh.

In this battle of Point Pleasant (also known as the battle of the Great Kanawha) the Indians' losses were not so great as those of the whites. The whites indeed had suffered terrifically at the hands of a force of little more than half their number. But as the Indians had withdrawn, the victory was evidently with the whites, and Cornstalk finally yielded to his principal chiefs and agreed to a treaty of peace. Besides, Cornstalk knew that Lord Dunmore's force would reinforce Lewis's troops, and the crafty old warrior had the wisdom to realize that he could not cope with the united army.

Logan was invited to attend the peace conference, but he refused, although he had stopped fighting. Clark, who was present at the conference, made a friendly inquiry as to Logan's reason for not coming. He was told that Logan "was like a mad dog; his bristles had been up but had not quite fallen, but the good talk now going on might allay them." Evidently, Logan did not feel like trusting himself at a peace conference just then.

It was on this occasion that Logan presented his famous speech, which in his absence was read at the meeting. The speech is here quoted in full.

I appeal to any white man to say if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry and he gave him not meat; if ever he came cold and naked and he clothed him not. During the

course of the last long and bloody war, Logan remained idle in his camp, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites that my countrymen pointed as I passed and said, "Logan is the friend of the white man." I had even thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man. Colonel Cresap, the last spring, in cold blood and unprovoked, murdered all the relations of Logan, not even sparing my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This called on me for revenge. I have sought it. I have killed many. I have fully glutted my vengeance. For my country I rejoice at the beams of peace, but do not harbor the thought that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. He will not turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one!

Of this remarkable speech Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on Virginia* says: "I may challenge the whole orations of Demosthenes and Cicero to produce a single passage superior to the speech of Logan, a Mingo chief, to Lord Dunmore."

Clark felt a deep sympathy for this outraged chief. It was no doubt through his friendship for this splendid specimen of the American Indians that he began to understand and appreciate that noble race. In his later career he used this understanding to great advantage.

Logan suffered the sad fate of many of his unfortunate race. He became a slave to fire water and gradually sank deeper and deeper into savagery. He wrought terrible bloodshed in later wars, though occasionally he showed flashes of his earlier nobility as a friend of the white man. He once saved Simon Kenton, Clark's famous scout, from torture and

death. He was killed in a drunken brawl by one of his own race.

By Cornstalk's treaty with Lord Dunmore, the Shawnees gave up all their claims to lands south of the Ohio River and agreed to stay out of this region. The great chief Cornstalk was given into the hands of the whites as one of the hostages in security for the good faith of the Indians. He soon made his escape, however, and at the beginning of the Revolution he tried to maintain peace with the Americans. But unfortunately he was killed by lawless soldiers while he was on a friendly mission to Pittsburgh.

Lord Dunmore's War is a dramatic incident in our history which really had far-reaching consequences, especially in the life and career of George Rogers Clark. It gave recognition to his capacity as a leader of men, and it gave him a basis of military training, which was to be of great value to him later. As a result of his services, he was offered a permanent commission in the British army. This he refused, because he foresaw the coming split between Great Britain and the American colonies. His insight into the character and habits of the Indians was enlarged by these experiences. His zest for adventure was stimulated, and he was now ready for a larger career in the more distant West.

CHAPTER THREE

IN OLD KENTUCKY

CLARK was eager to go where he could have adventure, and the most promising place was Kentucky. In 1775 people were flocking there in such numbers that a Virginia minister wrote: "What a Buzzel is this; amongst the people about Kentucky? To hear people speak of it, one would think it was a new-found Paradise."

There were two main routes leading into Kentucky at this time, and settlers traveled over both. The most direct route was from Virginia and Pennsylvania around the spurs of the Alleghenies, down the Ohio River, and into the interior along the Kentucky River. The other was an overland trail through Cumberland Gap at the southeastern corner of the Kentucky region, where Daniel Boone, as a representative of the Transylvania Company, was clearing the famous Wilderness Road from the Gap north and westward to Boonesboro on the Kentucky River.

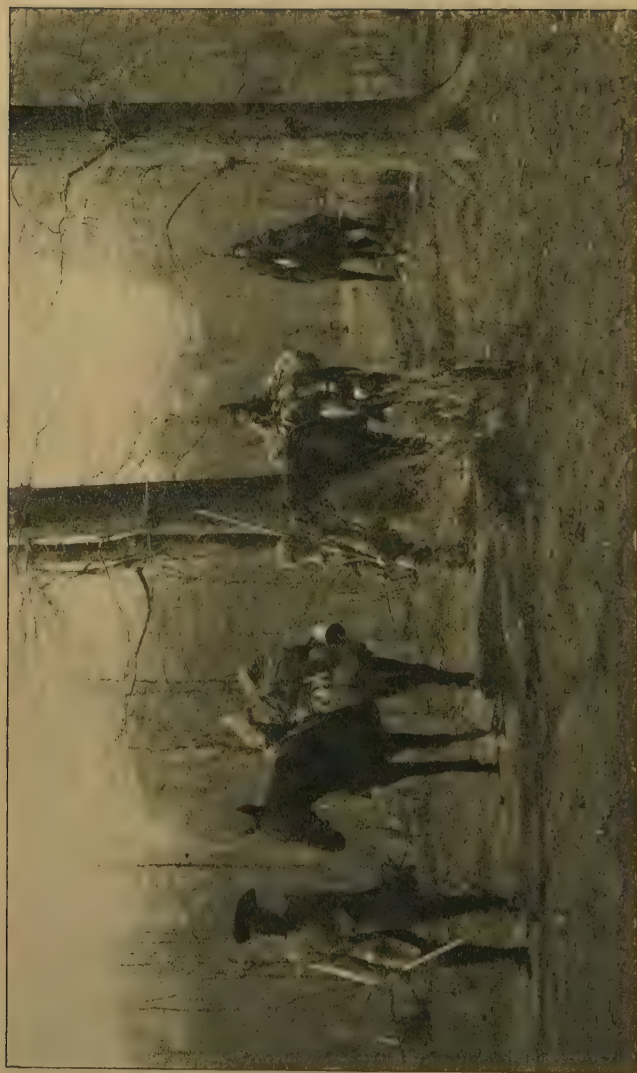
It is easy to see why Kentucky attracted these hardy pioneers. The country itself was beautiful with its mountains, its rich canebrakes and tangled forests, and its bluegrass, which even today we think of in connection with the name "Kentucky." Of course such a land was full of game. If a man had his rifle and plenty of ammunition, there was no danger of starving.

Although no Indian nation made its home there,

it was a favorite hunting ground for many nations. For generations Indians had been coming to this country to hunt, and the different tribes had clashed here until the section was known as the "dark and bloody ground." Now, however, the Shawnee Indians had made an agreement to keep away from lands south of the Ohio River. This encouraged men to move out with their families. There had been temporary beginnings of settlements by Daniel Boone and others as early as 1769, but the first permanent ones were not made until about 1775.

By this time Clark had become an experienced surveyor, and it was natural that he should find his way down the Ohio into this new western country. The Ohio Company sent him to Kentucky as deputy to Colonel Hancock Lee, who succeeded Washington as chief surveyor for this land company. His salary was eighty pounds a year, which was less than four hundred dollars, and he had also the privilege of taking what lands he wanted for himself. That he was pleased with Kentucky we know from a letter to his brother in which he said, "A richer and more beautiful country than this I believe has never been seen in America yet."

In his position as surveyor, he was able to choose for himself several areas of rich land. Among these lands were fourteen hundred acres in central Kentucky, on which was located a valuable salt lick, where a much-needed supply of salt was obtained during the Revolution. Salt was almost as necessary



A family emigrating from Virginia to the West at about the beginning of the American Revolution. From "Vincennes," one of the Chronicles of America Photoplays. Copyright. By permission of Yale University Press.

to settlers as gunpowder. Besides contributing to their daily food needs, the salt licks provided easy game, for the hunters used to hide near them and kill the wild animals that came for salt.

By midsummer of 1775 Clark had established a little settlement in central Kentucky, almost on the present site of Frankfort. He named the place Lees-town, in honor of his chief, Colonel Hancock Lee. This settlement, however, was soon abandoned and its inhabitants moved to forts, which offered better protection from Indian raids.

Clark roved about among the various camps and settlements and became well acquainted with this entire section. In the late summer of 1775 he attached himself to the older settlement at Harrodsburg, which James Harrod was now developing after its temporary abandonment during Lord Dunmore's War. "It was at this period," Clark said, "I first thought of paying some attention to the interests of this country."

By the end of 1775 the newcomers in Kentucky had established three principal settlements—Boonesboro, Harrodsburg, and Logan's Fort at St. Asaphs. The Indians, observing the growing strength of the white people, began to feel that they would be driven out entirely. They made frequent raids on the settlements, so that at the time of Clark's coming to Harrodsburg the little forts were in danger of being destroyed.

What the settlements needed was a leader, and Clark was that leader. The difficulty of the task is shown by the fact that these three forts had to be

defended with a surprisingly small number of fighting men — only one hundred and two of them at that time, as nearly as can now be determined. Of these fighters, fifteen were at Logan's Fort, twenty-two at Boonesboro, and sixty-five at Harrodsburg.

It was in meeting these Indian attacks with his small band of men that Clark won the unbounded respect of the settlers. He soon found all his time and energy absorbed in repelling the Indian raids upon the settlers of Harrodsburg and vicinity. Young as he was, he showed superior qualities of leadership, which were quickly recognized by the sturdy pioneers of this "island in the wilderness." Sterling and superior manhood comes to the front quickly under such elemental surroundings. The "brave fellows in Kentucky" liked this "fine soldierly looking young man," who took such a hearty interest in them and their bold scheme of settlement. Older and more experienced frontiersmen, such as Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton, James Harrod, and Benjamin Logan, looked to the high-spirited young Clark as their leader. It was a recognition of genuine worth and superior intelligence. A man who knew him at this time in Kentucky said of him: "His appearance, well calculated to attract attention, was rendered particularly agreeable by the manliness of his deportment and the intelligence of his conversation, but above all, by the vivacity and boldness of his spirit for enterprise." What a graphic, yet simple statement of a strong and pleasing personality!

These early settlers of Kentucky represented every



The entrance to the stockade at Harrodsburg, Kentucky, in 1777. From "Vincennes," one of the *Chronicles of America Photoplays*. Copyright. By permission of Yale University Press.

type of the older colonies in the East, and there were many striking and distinctive characters among them. Clark stood out, not so much because of difference, as because of degree. He embodied to a high degree the finest traditions of Old Virginia. In him were combined the dramatic daring of Captain John Smith and the thoughtful military genius and statesmanship of George Washington. Moreover, he was singularly favored in physique — a tall, powerfully built, sandy-haired, blue-eyed young giant, with all the dash and daring of a red-blooded young Virginian of his day.

At this time the domain of Kentucky might have been termed "no man's land." Besides the general

Indian claim to it as a hunting ground, there were five separate claims of ownership :

First, Virginia claimed it, dating back to her colonial grant by charter from James I in 1609.

Second, the king of England claimed it as part of his royal domain.

Third, Spain claimed it on shadowy and ancient grounds.

Fourth, the Transylvania Company, organized by Colonel Richard Henderson, claimed it by deed from the Cherokee Indians.

Fifth, the Vandalia and Indiana Companies claimed it by deed from the Iroquois Indians.

Clark believed that, to keep the settlements alive, the support of one of these claimants was necessary. As he was a native Virginian and had kept in close touch with that colony, it was natural that he should favor Virginia ownership. He therefore decided to call upon Virginia for protection. On June 6, 1776, he called a general meeting of the settlers at Harrodsburg. They decided to send delegates, or deputies, to the Assembly of Virginia at Williamsburg with a petition praying the Assembly to establish the County of Kentucky. George Rogers Clark and John Gabriel Jones were elected as their delegates. They promptly started for Williamsburg to lay their claims before the Assembly, which was then in session.

To make the journey from far-away Kentucky to Williamsburg required both bravery and physical

endurance. There were only the two white men to combat any parties of Indians which might attack them on the way. They were anxious to travel as rapidly as possible, a difficult task in that rough country. But the men, fired with patriotism, set out without hesitation. They went by way of Boone's Wilderness Road, traveling on horseback. On the third day Jones's horse gave out. After working with him a while, they saw that they were wasting time, as he would be of no more use to them. So they left him; and as the country was too hilly for a horse to carry double, the two men had to take turns walking and riding on Clark's horse. Now, indeed, the situation was dangerous. With only one mount, they could not hope to escape if they were attacked by a larger party of Indians than the two men could handle.

To make matters worse, it was a very rainy season. As a result of having wet feet continuously for several days and nights, they got what the hunters called scald feet. Clark said that during this trip he suffered greater torment than he had ever before experienced. But the danger from Indians was too great to allow them to build camp fires or to stop for rest. Besides, they were eager to reach Powell's Valley, some ten or twelve miles above Cumberland Gap, where they expected to find a settlement and to rest in safety.

When they came in sight of Powell's Valley, they saw that the station had been burned down.

On examining the ground, they found footprints of moccasins all about the place. So, weary as they were, the men had to press on even faster, for the Indians might still be lurking in the neighborhood.

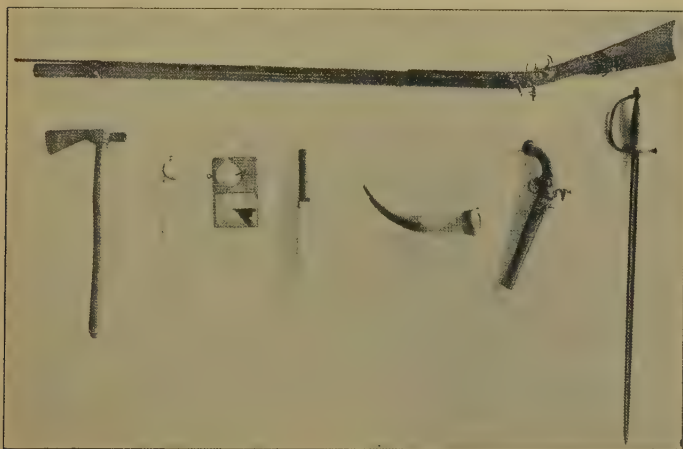
The next station, Martin's Fort, was about eight miles farther on. Towards this Clark and Jones hastened. The safest way for them to travel would have been through the woods, where they could slip quietly among the trees, but they could not endure walking through the thick underbrush with their burning feet. They were obliged to keep to the main road, where they furnished an easy mark for hidden enemies. Frequently they heard in the distance reports of Indian guns.

At length they reached Martin's Fort, only to find that it had been abandoned, though it had not been burned down. In their disappointment, they searched the fort for clues which would indicate what had happened to the settlers. They found that the doors had been locked and most of the supplies had been left behind.

In desperation, Clark and Jones discussed what was to be done next. They were sixty miles from the nearest inhabitants and were surrounded by hostile Indians. They were now suffering so much from their feet that they could walk no farther. The only thing left to be done, was to intrench themselves, in spite of the danger, in one of the strongest cabins and treat their scald feet with a preparation of oil and oak bark. They thought that after a rest they could push on more speedily. Also, they hoped

that in the meantime a Kentucky party which was to follow them would arrive. The two men were well armed with rifles, pistols, and swords, and Clark was confident that with the protection of a cabin they could defend themselves against a large number of Indians.

After they had chosen the cabin which they thought would prove safest, Clark climbed upon its roof, went down the chimney, and unbarred the door so that Jones could come in. Then they killed a hog with a sword and stored some corn, wood, and a barrel of water in the cabin. As hastily as possible, they barricaded the door and windows, opened some loopholes, and prepared for a desperate defense against the attack which they expected at



Arms, together with watch and pocket compass (in case), which belonged to George Rogers Clark. From the collection of Colonel R. T. Durrett, Louisville, Kentucky.

any moment. When the Indians appeared, Jones was to load the weapons and Clark was to fire them.

They decided that their best plan was to set fire to all the cabins except their own. This would keep the Indians from using them as barricades, and it would also clear the space around their little fortress so that they could guard against a surprise attack. As the wind was not in the right direction for them to burn the other cabins without danger to their own, they had to wait for a shift. Meanwhile, they spread out their arms and ammunition on a convenient table, dressed their feet with oil, and cooked some food.

By the time they had finished their meal, the wind had died away. Now would be a good time to set fire to the other houses. The men unbarred the door. But just as it swung open, they heard quite clearly the tinkle of a horse's bell. There was the sound of hoofs on the road, coming in their direction. Hastily barring the door again, they seized their rifles. In low tones Clark and his companion made final plans for defense and took their places. The clatter sounded much louder—it was evident that they would be attacked by a large number. Grimly the two men waited. Into the clearing came the foremost riders. Exclamations came from both the waiting men. To their intense joy, the newcomers proved to be a group of Martin's Fort settlers. They had returned from the Clinch River settlement, where they were now living, to collect some of their belongings.

Clark and Jones were much encouraged, now that they had companions. When the settlers were ready to return to Clinch River, the two men accompanied them across the mountains. Thus they reached Virginia in safety.

The Assembly had adjourned before their arrival at Williamsburg and would not convene again until October. Clark therefore decided to present the matter to the governor. Patrick Henry, who was then governor of Virginia, was ill at his home in Hanover County, and Clark had only a brief and formal conference with him. He wrote a favorable letter to the Council, and Clark returned to Williamsburg to appear before that executive body.

From the Council Clark at first got only repeated discouragements. Some of its members thought that Virginia should assume responsibility for Kentucky; some thought that it should not; others were in doubt as to what should be done.

Clark's first demand was for five hundred pounds of powder to be conveyed to Kentucky for the settlers to use in protecting themselves from the Indians. After much delay and confusion, the Council finally agreed to furnish powder on condition that it should be regarded only as a loan to friends in distress. Clark himself was to be personally answerable for the loan, and in case the Assembly in the October session should decide not to admit the Kentuckians as citizens of Virginia, he was to pay for the powder. The Council refused to furnish convey-

ance for the ammunition. An order was simply issued to the keeper of the magazine, directing him to deliver the powder to Clark at Williamsburg.

Here George Rogers Clark rose to the occasion with his usual bold shrewdness. He returned the order for the powder and wrote a brief note to the Council, saying that he could not convey these stores at his own expense such a distance through a hostile country. He expressed his regret at finding it necessary to seek other protection, though he had no doubt of getting it. In closing, he said that "if a country is not worth protecting, it is not worth claiming."

This had the desired effect. On August 23, 1776, it was ordered that five hundred pounds of ammunition should be conveyed to Pittsburgh and there held for further directions from Clark. Then at the fall session of the Assembly, after two months of determined opposition and much political maneuvering, the friends of Clark, under the leadership of Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry, succeeded in getting a bill passed, creating the County of Kentucky as a new county of Virginia, with the boundaries of the present state of Kentucky. Thus on December 7, 1776, Kentucky was born, and in this way George Rogers Clark became the founder and father of that great commonwealth.

In the meantime, Clark and Jones had started back to Kentucky with the powder. In their party was Joseph Rogers, Clark's cousin, whom he had persuaded to join them. After great danger and

hardship, Clark, aided by several Kentuckians and a small party from Virginia, succeeded in carrying the five hundred pounds of powder from Pittsburgh down the Ohio River to Limestone (now Maysville), and from there he transported it overland to Harrodsburg. The party was ambushed and attacked by Indians several times on the way. On Christmas Day, within a short distance of Harrodsburg, John Gabriel Jones, who had been Clark's faithful companion throughout this journey, was killed. Three others of the company, among them Joseph Rogers, were taken prisoners.

Although Clark was in the forefront of all these dangers, he, like Washington, seemed to have a charmed life. So far as the reports show, he was never imprisoned or wounded, though he had many hairbreadth escapes.

The value of the five hundred pounds of powder which Clark brought back to the hard-pressed Kentuckians may be appreciated if its cost is compared with the cost of labor. At a little store in Boonesboro powder was then selling, when any was to be had, for \$2.62 $\frac{2}{3}$ per pound, and a working man's wages was 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ cents a day.

The settlers of Kentucky now had ammunition and were empowered to organize a government and to compel military discipline for the defense of their territory. Clark immediately set about establishing the government. He became commander-in-chief of the Prime Riflemen of Kentucky with the title of major. Daniel Boone was a captain under him.

This organization of the County of Kentucky came none too soon, for throughout the year of 1777 the Indians made persistent efforts to wipe out the little settlements.

Clark kept a diary beginning Christmas Day, 1776, and continuing to March 30, 1778. In it he told of killings and scalping's by the Indians and the bloody revenge of the hardy riflemen. The diary shows the life of the settlers as one ceaseless round of adventure, danger, and suffering; but in spite of it all, these pioneers were not without their pleasures, as Clark's brief notes show. Here are some items which are typical of his daily accounts:

December 29, 1776 A large party of Indians attacked McClellan's Fort and wounded John McClellan, Charles White, Robert Todd, and Edward Worthington, the first two mortally.

30. Moved to Harrodsburg from McClellan's Fort.

January 6, 1777. John McClellan died of his wounds.

March 6, 1777. Thomas Shores and William Ray killed at the Shawnee Spring.

7. The Indians attempted to cut off from the fort a small party of our men — a skirmish ensued. We had four men wounded and some cattle killed. We killed and scalped one Indian and wounded several.

18. A small party of Indians killed and scalped Hugh Wilson about one half mile from the fort near night and escaped.

April 19. John Todd and Rich Calloway elected Burgesses. James Barry married the Widow Wilson.

July 9. Lieutenant Linn married — great merriment.

August 9. Surrounded ten or twelve Indians near the fort — killed three and wounded others; the plunder was sold for upwards of seventy pounds.



At Harrodsburg a settler tells Clark that he is going to move on to the country northwest of the Ohio River, "Indians or no Indians." From "Vincennes," one of the *Chronicles of America Photoplays*. Copyright. By permission of Yale University Press.

This item under date of August ninth is characteristic of the terse manner in which Clark recorded vivid events with little or no mention of his own share in them. On this day, of which he tells so little, some of the men were preparing the ground to sow seed near the fort at Harrodsburg. Clark, who was with the group, noticed that some cattle, grazing among high weeds in the most distant part of the field, were acting in a strange and frightened manner. This led him to suspect that Indians were hiding there, watching for a chance to attack the workers.

He passed the word quietly for the men to continue work near the fort out of rifle range from the patch of weeds. Meanwhile he went into the fort and collected some men. With their rifles, the party slipped out of the other side of the fort and made a detour through the timber. Sure enough, the Indians were there, and Clark and his men attacked them from the rear. In the ensuing sharp conflict, Clark took a leading part and killed one of the Indians in personal encounter, though he made no mention of it in his diary. The redskins were pursued to their fixed encampment, which had been a center of depredations for some time. The whites raided the camp and took considerable plunder.

Clark sums up the regular course of events as follows: "Our conduct was very uniform. The defense of our forts, the procuring of provisions, and if possible surprising the Indians (which was frequently done), burying the dead, and dressing the wounded, seemed to be all our business."

Such was the situation of this little post of Harrodsburg, which on May 1, 1777, could number only eighty-four fighting men, with ninety-four women and children and fourteen disabled men under their protection. Furthermore, they could hardly expect aid from outside as they were two hundred miles from the nearest of the old settlements (the Holston in Tennessee), in a savage wilderness overrun by several nations of hostile Indians.

We can hardly give adequate credit to these Kentucky settlers for what they accomplished in

this perilous period of the Revolution. Here on that "dark and bloody ground" was made the first effective pioneer stand against the Indians and the British in the West. These heroes of Kentucky made it possible for other emigrants to follow them and to live in comparative security until finally this whole region was settled by freedom-loving people.

The early pioneers in Kentucky were saved by the foresight and leadership of George Rogers Clark, and it was through his efforts that the region was taken over by Virginia. Throughout this period he was preparing for that larger and more daring enterprise which was to add an empire to the territory of the United States.

CHAPTER FOUR

PATRIOT VISION

THE Revolutionary War, now raging along the Atlantic coast, stirred in George Rogers Clark a deep and patriotic interest. Four of his brothers were fighting — all of them officers. And while he was protecting the Kentucky settlements from Indian attacks, there came to him the vision of winning the western lands for the new nation.

Notwithstanding the pressure of strenuous days and hazardous nights in the defense of the fort at Harrodsburg, he was "reflecting on things in general, particularly Kentucky — how it accorded with the interests of the United States." Although he was naturally affable and witty, his companions found him unusually serious during these stormy days, for he was thinking deeply on things far afield from their immediate interests. He says that this long train of thinking led him to "lay aside every private view and engage seriously in the war, making the interest and welfare of the public his only view until the fate of the continent should be known."

Clark felt that the salvation of Kentucky was essential to the success of the Revolutionary War. He knew that the principal reason why the pioneers could not subdue the Indians in Kentucky was the fact that they were constantly incited to fresh outrages by the British, who had control of the vast territory north of the Ohio.

While Clark was thinking how he could break the hold of the British on the Indians, the heroic idea came to him to carry the war into the very heart of that country. He saw that defensive warfare, no matter how bravely maintained, would do no lasting good. The Indians moved down upon the settlements, made surprise attacks, and were gone with scalps and plunder before the settlers could avenge themselves. In their own region, north of the Ohio, the Indians would always find the British ready to help them. Clark therefore conceived the bold plan of attacking the British at their headquarters.

He sent scouts into the territory north of the Ohio. They went as far as Kaskaskia and Vincennes, and from their reports he made himself familiar with the state of affairs there and especially with the activity of the British among the Indians. Then he began planning. If he could seize these northern posts, he might be able to drive the British out of the West and break up the systematic Indian outrages on the settlements. Thus while Washington was fighting for the seaboard strip comprising the thirteen colonies on the Atlantic coast, he could take this great western region for the new nation.

It was a plan of offensive warfare which for daring and insight has few parallels in history. It was worthy of a man who possessed the heroic culture of Old Virginia combined with the rare hardihood and bold independence of Old Kentucky. Having seen this vision and made his plan, Clark took immediate steps to put the plan into execution.

It was natural that he should again turn to Virginia for aid, and indeed Virginia had a natural and legal interest in the matter. By the terms of the charter given by James I in 1609, Virginia claimed all territory two hundred miles north and two hundred miles south of Old Point Comfort, and "up into the land, throughout from sea to sea, west and northwest." This included the region north of the Ohio, usually called the Illinois country, as well as Kentucky on the south.

At the close of the French and Indian War, Great Britain was the only European power that effectively claimed this region. Both the Illinois country and Kentucky were wild Indian land, but Kentucky did not belong to any particular tribe and was considered open to settlement. The Illinois country, however, was declared by King George III to be Indian land in which settlement was prohibited. Because of this decree, no settlements had been made in the Illinois country by the American colonists. The royal proclamation decreed, in 1763, that these "lands of the West should revert to the Indians to be theirs absolutely until the King's further pleasure be known." Furthermore, the "lands of the West" in which settlement was prohibited were definitely designated as consisting of the land north and west of the Ohio River. It was this beautiful region — a rare garden spot bounded by the Alleghenies and the Mississippi, the Great Lakes and the Ohio, including all the beautiful valley of the Wabash — which George



"The Indians are coming!" — an incident of the Kentucky frontier. From "Daniel Boone," one of the *Chronicles of America Photoplays*. Copyright. By permission of Yale University Press.

Rogers Clark determined to win for his state and his nation.

A few isolated French settlements, established before the French and Indian War, still remained in the Illinois country. The British now held these posts and used them mainly as a base of support and encouragement to the Indians in their attacks on the American pioneers. There was old Post Miami (the present Fort Wayne) on the Maumee, Ouiatanon (now Lafayette) on the upper Wabash, and Vincennes in the very heart of the lower Wabash Valley. Farthest west were Kaskaskia and a few neighboring

settlements on the Mississippi, a little south of the present site of St. Louis. Farther north were St. Joseph near Lake Michigan and Detroit on the strait between Lake Huron and Lake Erie. The most important of these posts were Detroit, Kaskaskia, and Vincennes.

The French Creoles in these settlements were an easy-going, carefree people, who lived on friendly terms with the Indians. They were unprogressive and supported themselves mainly by hunting and trapping. The priests were there to look after their spiritual welfare; and in political or government affairs the people seemed to feel very little concern. Now that France had entirely lost control in this territory, the Creoles apparently submitted, without protest, to British rule. It mattered little to them which nation governed them, so long as they were allowed to continue their carefree ways. The scouts whom Clark sent to Kaskaskia and Vincennes reported that the Creoles did not feel any fixed attachment to the government of Great Britain. It was discovered later that they were, in fact, becoming a little restive under British military rule. About this time the British authorities arrested one of the merchants of Kaskaskia on the charge of treason.

All through this region, during the eventful period from 1763 to 1777 the Indians roamed and ravaged at will. It was indeed "Indian land" and seemed to be reverting to a state of primeval chaos. It was the home of many powerful nations of Indians. Here

they launched their murderous assaults upon the settlements of Kentucky and other regions farther south and east. Here after each repulse they returned to recruit their forces. To invade and conquer this wilderness empire was an undertaking of which no one had probably even dreamed before George Rogers Clark made his great decision.

Clark was a man of action. As soon as he had decided to appeal to Virginia for help, he immediately began getting ready for the trip from Harrodsburg to Williamsburg. A company of Virginia militia under command of Colonel John Bowman arrived September 2, 1777, and Clark felt that Kentucky was now fairly well defended. The settlers bade him farewell with sinking hearts. They thought that if he got back to the East, where the fighting was going on, he would join his brothers in the army. They had looked to him for leadership so long that they felt sure the settlement would suffer without him. Clark assured them that the welfare of Kentucky would always be foremost in his interest, but he could not reveal to them his larger plans.

On October 1, 1777, Clark started out from Harrodsburg on his long journey of six hundred and twenty miles. He rode with a party of twenty-two returning emigrants and on the third day others joined them so that there were "seventy-six in all, besides women and children," as Clark noted in his diary. They killed deer and buffalo to supplement their food supplies. After about two weeks Clark parted from the company and rode on alone, making

better progress, sometimes as much as thirty-five miles a day. There were more settlers along the route now than on his former trip east and Clark stopped frequently at their houses. At ten o'clock at night on November first, after a full month on the way, he reached his father's home.

He paused there only a day or two. He sold his Kentucky rifle for fifteen pounds and swapped his horse for a better mount. He also bought some fine new clothes, for he wanted to make a good impression when he went before the Virginia Assembly at Williamsburg.

News of the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga on October seventeenth had just reached Virginia. Clark, much encouraged by this, was more eager than ever to put through his plan, which he still kept absolutely secret.

On reaching the capital, he first went to see the Auditor of State and for some days he was busy settling his military accounts. As major of militia for the County of Kentucky, he had to account for the money Virginia had granted him on his previous trip east, before he could receive salary for his services. It was on December 10, 1777, that he at last had the opportunity to lay his ambitious plans before the great governor of Virginia, Patrick Henry, the first American governor of the oldest American commonwealth.

Clark had met Patrick Henry the preceding year when he secured the protection of Virginia for the County of Kentucky, but they had had only a brief

and formal conference. The governor, however, was well acquainted with the Clark family. He had served in the Virginia Revolutionary Convention with Jonathan, an older brother of George Rogers, and he had acted as attorney for Clark's father in some important legal matters. So it was with confidence as well as deep conviction that Clark, major of militia for the County of Kentucky, made known his heroic purpose.

It was indeed fortunate that such a patriot as Patrick Henry was presiding over Virginia in these critical years. The inspired words of his famous speech were ringing through the land as the battle cry of American independence. One can easily imagine how the spirited appeals of young Clark must have awakened response in his breast. He listened with the utmost sympathy and attention, but at first he did not encourage Clark. He knew the tremendous risks and hardships involved in such an enterprise. He knew the impossibility of procuring enough men and supplies when all the man power and all the wealth of the colonies — and there was not enough of either — were absorbed in the armies of Washington.

During these very days of December, 1777, when George Rogers Clark was urging Virginia to send a force of men to conquer the West, Washington and his army were freezing and starving at Valley Forge. All the men that Virginia could muster were with Washington, and the state was not able even to clothe and feed them properly. Large numbers of

Continental soldiers at Valley Forge were actually barefooted in the snow. Many of them died from weakness and exposure and nearly one third of the entire army deserted. The victory at Saratoga had been counterbalanced by the loss of Philadelphia and the defeat at Germantown. It is not strange that Patrick Henry hesitated, fiery spirited though he was. But the dauntless young Clark persisted. He would not be denied.

His boyhood friend, Thomas Jefferson, was called into council. How fortunate again that in this crisis a statesman such as Thomas Jefferson, who had written the Declaration of Independence, should have been consulted! Jefferson grasped immediately the possibilities of an invasion of the Illinois country and he gave instant approval to the plan.

George Mason and George Wythe, both of them members of the Virginia Assembly at that time, were also called into this momentous council with Henry, Jefferson, and Clark. It may well be doubted if a gathering of five men more distinguished in ability and achievement was ever held in America. The place in history of Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson is well known. George Mason was author of the Bill of Rights of Virginia's first constitution and George Wythe was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Mason was a teacher, or mentor, of George Rogers Clark. Wythe was the founder of the American system of teaching jurisprudence and he was a teacher of Thomas Jefferson and John Marshall. Both Mason and Wythe were members

of the convention that wrote the United States Constitution.

After many days and nights of deliberation in secret — for secrecy was necessary to success — these five men evolved a plan which Governor Henry submitted to the Virginia Assembly. Still they did not dare make Clark's intention public. They feared opposition on the ground that Virginia could supply neither men nor money. Without indicating its real purpose, Governor Henry persuaded the Assembly to approve the plan.

Clark was commissioned lieutenant colonel of Virginia militia with authority to draw twelve hundred pounds — less than six thousand dollars — from the public treasury and to enlist seven companies of fifty men each, for the purpose of proceeding against "our enemies in the West." Governor Henry gave him two sets of written instructions. One, "written designedly for deception," was for the public. It provided that Clark should use the men and money in the defense of the Kentucky settlements. The other, for his own private counsel and direction, authorized Clark to attack the British posts. Clark had modestly refrained from asking that he be given chief command, but it was natural that the man who had conceived the enterprise should lead it.

To add to the meager monthly pay which was provided for the soldiers, Jefferson, Mason, and Wythe joined unofficially in a written statement which they gave Clark. In this paper they expressed their assurance that, in the event his enterprise

should prove successful, there would be granted to each private soldier three hundred acres, and to the officers in the usual proportion, "out of the lands which may be conquered." It was their belief, they said, that Colonel Clark might "safely confide in the justice and generosity of the Virginia Assembly." From this it appears that these distinguished leaders of Virginia felt hopeful that the enterprise would result in a conquered domain and that the hardy patriots who should accomplish it would gain both glory and profit.

Thus were laid the concrete plans for the colossal undertaking. It could have been conceived only by a man of rare courage and genius. Only men of unlimited vision and statesmanship could appreciate and arrange it. Its execution was to call for an exhibition of courage, skill, and endurance, of which even Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson little dreamed.

CHAPTER FIVE

CORN ISLAND

WITH meager support, yet "clothed with all the authority he wished," on January 2, 1778, Clark started forth with a young crusader's zeal to recruit his army.

Immediately he met with obstacles that would have daunted any but a most persevering soul. There were few, if any, men in the states for whom the project of a perilous campaign in the West had any attraction. There was fighting enough in the East, and they were badly needed there. Influential men of the border discouraged enlistment and encouraged desertion of men already enlisted for Clark's campaign. They thought it a wild and foolish waste of men and resources to lead such a company into the far West in pursuit of what seemed little more than a dream. But in spite of obstacles and with all possible dispatch, Clark conducted recruiting parties along the frontier from Pittsburgh to Carolina. He received valuable aid from three Virginians, who had been with him in Kentucky and who became his most trusted under-officers. They were Leonard Helm, Joseph Bowman, and William Harrod, a brother of James Harrod, the founder of Harrodsburg.

Clark had estimated that five hundred men would be required to make his campaign a success, and he counted certainly upon a minimum of seven companies of fifty men each. But when his plans ma-

tured to the point of embarking on the Ohio River, before the middle of May, he could muster all told only about one hundred and fifty men. In defiance of all discouragement, he determined to start his campaign with this insufficient force. He expected to be joined along the river by companies of fighting men from Kentucky and Tennessee.

Starting on May 12, 1778, with all the force he could collect at Redstone (now Brownsville, Pennsylvania), Clark went down the Monongahela River to Pittsburgh on the Ohio. After taking in stores at Pittsburgh and later at Wheeling, he "proceeded down the river with caution." He stopped at the mouth of the Great Kanawha River, the site of the Indian battle of Point Pleasant four years earlier, and was warmly welcomed by the little garrison there in Fort Randolph. As the fort had been attacked by a large body of Indians the day before, the commander urged him most earnestly to join in the pursuit of the Indians and the defense of the fort. But Clark was not to be diverted from his main purpose. Using every precaution to avoid a surprise by the Indians, he continued his voyage down the Ohio, and in the latter part of May he landed his little company at the Falls of the Ohio on Corn Island.

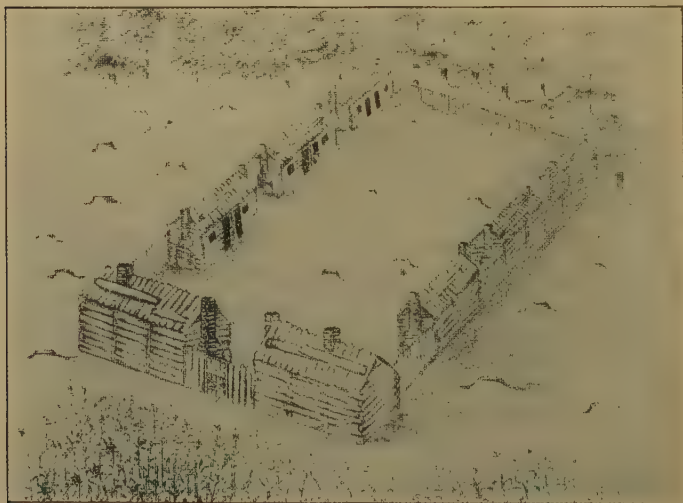
That beautiful island in the Ohio River, directly between the present sites of Louisville, Kentucky, and Jeffersonville, Indiana, has now disappeared. In 1778 and for many decades afterward it was a picturesque spot of ground containing about seventy

acres. It was about four fifths of a mile long by five hundred yards in its greatest breadth, and it extended from what is now Fourth Street, Louisville, to a point opposite Fourteenth Street. The island was heavily timbered in spots and had a dense undergrowth of cane upon the most fertile portion. It was named Corn Island for the reason that the first corn in that region was raised there. For many years it was a noted camping site and a place of resort for parties and picnics. But the timber was cut away, the soil was loosened by cultivation, and rock was quarried from its bed by a cement company. Thus time and tide, which have no tenderness for natural beauty or historic interest, gradually wore the island away.

During several weeks in May and June of 1778 Colonel Clark and his men lived on Corn Island. It may be added here that the island, with its immediate vicinity, became the base of Clark's principal activities throughout the remainder of his life. He made this the site of his chief military headquarters and established communities directly opposite the island, both north and south. He was really the founder of the great city of Louisville, on the south side, where he built Fort Nelson and where he lived for many years. He started the little town of Clarksville, on the north, where he built his last home.

Clark found Corn Island an ideal place to quarter his men and organize his force. The surrounding water made them safe from Indian attacks, while he

took time to train and discipline his recruits. Also he thought it would not be easy for them to desert when they learned his real intentions, for Clark decided that here he would tell his men about their undertaking. It had been assumed all along that his primary object was the defense of Kentucky. He had considered it necessary to keep his real objective rigidly secret, lest the Indians and the British should discover his plans and block his path. When the men finally learned that the enterprise was directed against the British forts in the West, a few of them escaped from the island. These deserters were pursued, and some of them were punished without mercy. Those who reached the Kentucky



The area of cabins and palisades on Corn Island, as it looked when Clark was in command.

settlements were treated with ignominy and disdain.

Clark had found it necessary to bring the families of some ten or twelve of his recruits in order to get the men to come with him. To provide for these families, he vigorously cut trees and cleared away the canebrake and made cabins and gardens. A temporary stockade was built and a store of supplies laid in for the families, so that they would be provided for during the absence of the men.

Clark was disappointed in his expectation of being joined by a large company from the Holston River region in Tennessee and several other companies from among his riflemen of the Kentucky settlements. Only a few men could be spared from the Holston, and but one small company was able to leave the hard-pressed station at Harrodsburg. About twenty men, all told, joined him.

The Kentuckians were probably in greater danger just at this time than ever before, so no other help could be expected from that source. Daniel Boone was a captive. In February, 1778, with twenty-seven Boonesboro men he had been made a prisoner at Blue Licks by a large force of Shawnee Indians, aided by a company of Miamis from old Post Miami (Fort Wayne). After being taken to Detroit and later to Chillicothe, Boone finally made his escape on June seventeenth and reached Boonesboro on the twentieth. He began preparing the little garrison at that place against an attack by a force of four hundred and fifty Mingo braves, whom he had seen

in their war paint at Chillicothe "ready to march against Boonesboro." Thus during those June days in 1778, while Clark was preparing to launch a desperate offensive campaign into the heart of the enemy's country, Boone was preparing for a more desperate defense of Kentucky than he had ever yet been compelled to make.

Few as they were in number, these Kentuckians who joined Clark were worth a host of ordinary volunteers. They were all expert riflemen of the western frontier, past masters in the art of woodcraft and thoroughly skilled in Indian warfare.

Typical among these Kentucky men was Simon Kenton, who ranks second only to Daniel Boone — if second even to him — in his fame as scout and Indian fighter of those stirring times. He was well acquainted with Clark and had fought by his side in Lord Dunmore's War. He had been a valuable scout and an able defender of the pioneers both at Harrodsburg and at Boonesboro. He was a giant in stature, swift of foot, keen of eye, and thoroughly hardened to all the perils of the wilderness.

On one occasion while Kenton was scouting about Boonesboro, the fort was attacked without warning by a large body of redskins. Only twenty-two men were then available for the defense of the fort. Most of these, including Si Kenton and Daniel Boone, found themselves cut off from the fort by a large band of Indians. In the dash for the fort, Boone's leg was broken by a bullet. Immediately a big warrior with a tomahawk attacked him. Boone,

being unable to stand, was on his knees holding up his empty rifle, warding off the savage blows of the redskin, when Kenton noticed his peril. Kenton had already killed two Indians and was reloading



Simon Kenton, "the blond giant of Kentucky." He was made a brigadier general in 1830 at the age of seventy-five, by special Act of Congress. Drawing from a painting made from life by L. W. Morgan. By courtesy of Kenton's great-great-granddaughter, Mrs. Martha Parkinson Mills, of Rensselaer, Indiana.

his rifle. With a lightning shot, he brought the Indian down. Running like a deer, he raised Boone to his shoulders and carried him safely to the fort with a howling band of savages almost at his heels. Si Kenton was that kind of scout and man. Such was the caliber of Clark's band.

In Clark's expedition to Kaskaskia and Vincennes, Kenton acted in the capacity of a specially trusted scout. Some time after this he was captured by the Indians and he ran the fearful gantlet eight times in the course of his captivity. Sixteen years later he served under Anthony Wayne in his triumphant campaigns against the Indians of the Old Northwest, and in 1813 he served under William Henry Harrison at the battle on the Thames. Kenton lived to a ripe old age and saw the Old Northwest completely settled. He was assigned a strip of land in Clark's Grant near Lexington, Scott County, Indiana, but it is not known that he ever occupied it. He had a son, who was at one time a member of the Indiana state legislature.

Clark's entire force on Corn Island consisted of four companies, commanded by Captains Joseph Bowman, Leonard Helm, William Harrod, and John Montgomery. Each of these officers was a leader of proved mettle and experience. They were native Virginians. All had served in Lord Dunmore's War and had fought Indians in Kentucky. The soldiers also were mostly Virginians. None of the companies numbered the full complement of fifty men. The exact number of the force has never

been definitely fixed, but it did not exceed one hundred and eighty, officers and men, all told. Simon Kenton declared that there were exactly one hundred and fifty-three in the expedition that left Corn Island. To the last days of his life Kenton retained a vivid memory of all the details of his experience with Clark.

Even after the rigid selection on the border and after the desertions at the island, Clark reduced his army still further by leaving behind, for the defense of the island, seven men whom he judged by his stern test of manhood to be unfitted for the expected fatigue of the march.

The men were equipped in the Indian mode. Each one carried a rifle and a supply of ammunition, a knife and a tomahawk, and a small amount of provisions. Clark was armed just like the others, except that he carried a sword instead of a tomahawk.

When finally ready for the march, Clark had a loyal band of true and tried souls like himself, with undying confidence in their leader — men who were ready to follow him through every peril.

CHAPTER SIX

KASKASKIA

ON the morning of June 24, 1778, the gallant enterprise was launched. They shot the Falls of the Ohio in boats in the early morning under an almost total eclipse of the sun. It seems that Clark had a shrewd appreciation of dramatic influences and their effect upon the superstitions of his men. The somber darkness, resulting from the eclipse of the sun in the early dawn, gave solemnity to the undertaking. There was much conjecture among the men, but it was generally regarded as a favorable omen.

Although Clark's main objective was Vincennes on the Wabash, he had decided to attack Kaskaskia first, because he knew it was not so strong a post as Vincennes was and it was located in a less dangerous Indian region. Moreover, he saw the possibility of a safe retreat across the Mississippi into Spanish domains in case the opposition at Kaskaskia proved too great for his little band.

Clark had carefully planned his route and his course of action. They were to proceed part way by water down the Ohio, and then northward by land. This made the journey much longer — a course almost at right angles — but he thought they were more likely to keep their movements secret and escape Indian attacks by following this route.

Let us note here the actual prospects of this hazardous enterprise. With a mere handful of men armed

with rifles, George Rogers Clark was going to traverse about two hundred and forty miles of wilderness infested by a number of powerful Indian tribes under the influence of the British and deadly hostile to the Big Knives, as they called the Americans. He was going to a French settlement, and it was known that the French Creoles were unfriendly to Americans at this time. He was going to attack a British fortress, Fort Gage at Kaskaskia, which he thought was fully garrisoned by British soldiers armed with muskets and cannon. He said, "I knew my case was desperate, but the more I reflected on my weakness, the more I was pleased with the enterprise."

They made the journey down the Ohio River as far as the site of old Fort Massac, which was a short distance below the mouth of the Tennessee River. The boats had been running four days and nights with relays of oarsmen, and they had succeeded in eluding the observation of Indian spies up to this point. Clark knew that the lower course of the river was carefully watched by Indians, and for this reason he decided to go by land northward from the mouth of the Tennessee.

Just as they landed, a party of some half dozen white hunters appeared. These men, whom they took into custody, seemed to be friendly. The strangers said that they had left Kaskaskia eight days before and were quite willing to give information and advice concerning that place. They were eager to join the expedition. They said they were

familiar with the country and the state of affairs at Kaskaskia; they could supply information which would be of great advantage. Clark doubted the advisability of adopting this group of men on such short acquaintance, but after examining them rigidly, he permitted them to join his forces. He chose one of their number, John Saunders, as a guide.

Then leaving with the boats the few bulky supplies they had brought with them thus far, they proceeded northward under the leadership of the new guide. They went on foot like Indians, traveling rapidly and silently through the woods, for a distance of about one hundred and twenty miles. The route was through an almost unbroken wilderness, and was for the most part swampy and difficult. There was an old military trace between Fort Massac and Kaskaskia, which was followed part of the way, but most of the distance was entirely unmarked. Colonel Clark walked in front with the guide, carrying a rifle in his hand and a pack upon his back. During the last two days they were without food. They carried provisions for only four days. The expedition took six days and they could not stop to hunt.

On the third day the guide, Saunders, became bewildered and finally admitted that he was entirely lost. His conduct looked very suspicious. Perhaps he was a spy and was leading them into an ambush. They were in great peril in a wilderness known only to Indians, and if Saunders had betrayed them, there was little hope that any of them

would escape. Clark began to fear that he had led his comrades into certain death and, as he afterwards said, he felt such a "flow of rage" that he could hardly master his passion. However, he decided to give Saunders a chance, and placing him under guard, he allowed the guide a short time for investigation. In the course of an hour or two, Saunders found a place that he knew, and from that point he was able to guide them safely. Saunders, in fact, proved to be a valuable aid to Clark in later campaigns.

Crossing the Kaskaskia River silently in the darkness, they fell upon Kaskaskia on the night of July fourth, and without firing a gun, took the town and captured Fort Gage. It was a masterly stroke and a bloodless victory. Their coming had been so swift and secret that it was entirely unheralded, and their attack in the darkness was a complete surprise.

It is uncertain just how strong the garrison was at this time. It probably consisted mainly of Creole militia with a small number of British soldiers under loose discipline. If they had expected an attack, they could no doubt have made a formidable defense. Captain Bowman wrote shortly after the capture that the place "was fortified strong enough to have fought a thousand men." Under the circumstances, secrecy and speed were the prime elements of Clark's masterly strategy.

An interesting tradition relates that on this particular night the soldiers were enjoying a grand ball with the pleasure-loving Creoles and had left the fort



George Rogers Clark at Kaskaskia. Painting by F. C. Yohn. Reproduced by courtesy of the Continental Insurance Company.

almost unguarded. Clark divided his company into two bands, one of which took possession of the town and compelled the inhabitants to stay in their homes under penalty of immediate death in case of any outcry or disorder. A detachment even got into the house of the governor and captured him in bed. Tradition tells of his awakening with Si Kenton's hand upon his shoulder.

According to the legendary account, Clark went to the ballroom and stood in the doorway gazing grimly on the merry scene. A painted Indian, lying on the floor near the door, saw the stern figure of the frontier commander and noticed the long sword at his side. He sprang up with a terrible yell that the Big Knives were upon them! Clark spoke calmly, telling them to go on with the dance, and added that now they would dance under Virginia's flag instead of England's.

In this manner Kaskaskia fell without bloodshed and on the terms of unconditional surrender. It was a wonderful victory—the result of intrepid vision and dexterous action.

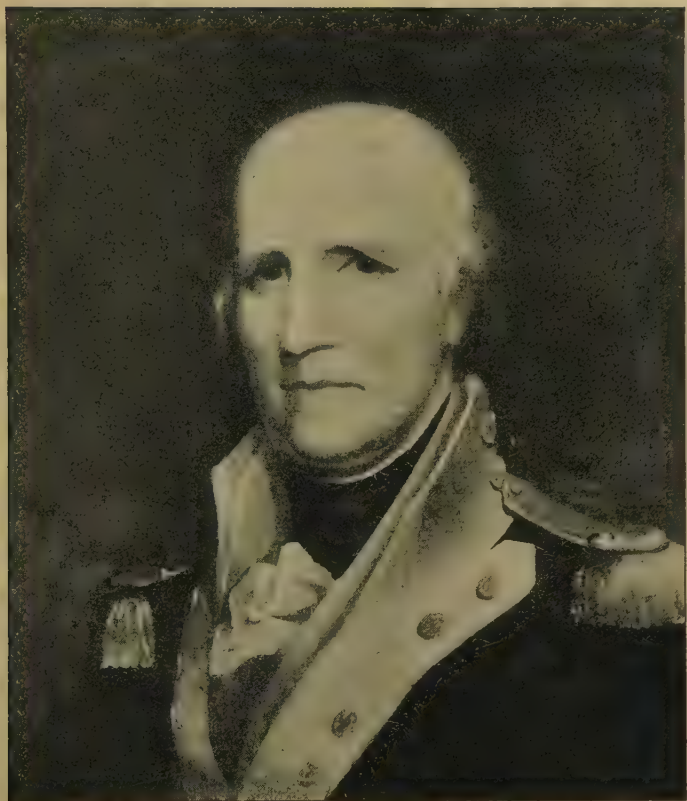
Clark sent a detachment under Captain Bowman to the smaller settlements north of Kaskaskia. Bowman took control of Prairie du Rocher, St. Phillips, and Cahokia, which were located on the Mississippi River within sixty miles of Kaskaskia. Cahokia, the most important, was the post farthest north. It was almost directly across the river from St. Louis, which was the capital of the Spanish domains of Upper Louisiana.

In order to mask his weakness, Clark represented that the Falls of the Ohio (Corn Island) was the main base of his operations, and the rumor prevailed that strong reinforcements could be had from there at any time.

After taking possession of Fort Gage, Clark's most important immediate task was to come to an understanding with the Creoles of Kaskaskia. Here he used a bold stroke of diplomacy.

Just before leaving Corn Island, he had received from Pittsburgh information of the French alliance with America. He knew of the aid which King Louis XVI was now freely extending to the former colonies of Great Britain along the Atlantic coast. He had kept this information a secret and was prepared to use it to the utmost advantage in dealing with the Kaskaskians.

These French Creoles still possessed a deep regard for their mother country, La Belle France. They had been taught by the British to believe that the Big Knives were more cruel and merciless than the Indians. Clark thought it well to let them suffer a while in this delusion. He knew that he and his men with their bearded faces, their clothes torn and soiled by the hardships of the march — they had left all extra clothing at the river — fully looked the savage part which the British had attributed to them. He put some of the Creole leaders in irons, stationed guards at the principal houses, and sternly forbade his men to hold intercourse with any of the inhabitants.



George Rogers Clark in the buff-and-blue uniform of an officer of the American Revolution. Painting made from life by Matthew Jouett. Reproduced by courtesy of the Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky, owner of the original portrait.

In deadly terror, the Creoles, headed by their priest, Pierre Gibault, asked permission to meet at the church before they had to separate. They evidently expected to be torn from their families, as the French people of Acadia had been. Now, Clark decided, was the time to change his attitude. He granted the permission they asked and called a council with the leaders. He told them he was surprised that they should look upon the Americans as no better than savages, and he assured them that he had come to bring them all the blessings of liberty for which the American colonies were now fighting. He explained to them the terms of the French alliance and the friendly relation that now existed between France and America. He assured them, furthermore, that he had no intention of interfering in any way with homes and families, or with any other interests of the Kaskaskians, provided they proved themselves trustworthy. He gave them full permission to continue their religious observances. The policy of his government, he said, was to interfere with no religion, except to protect it from insult.

At this sudden turn of affairs, the emotional Kaskaskians were overwhelmed with gratitude, and their terror was immediately changed to joy. In their excitement they rushed about, ringing bells and singing songs. Enthusiastically they took the oath of allegiance to the United States and became as friendly as Clark could possibly have desired. His rare adroitness in dealing with a conquered community had changed enemies to friends.

Clark promptly dispatched a full report of his success to Governor Henry by Captain Montgomery. The news was received in Virginia with great acclaim, and the governor and the legislature took action to give Clark both military and civil support. Clark was promoted to a full colonelcy with the title of Commander-in-Chief of the Virginia troops in the County of Illinois. Captain John Montgomery was made lieutenant colonel and Captain Joseph Bowman was commissioned major. Five companies of one hundred men each were to be immediately recruited for Clark. This information did not reach him until many months later — after he had taken Vincennes.

In the meantime, Clark established civil government in these French settlements and extended a large measure of civil liberty to the inhabitants. He was relieved of his civil responsibility in all this conquered country some time later, when the County of Illinois was created by the Virginia legislature and a complete system of local government was established.

In these early negotiations and in many of his later dealings with the Creoles, both at Kaskaskia and Vincennes, Clark was given timely aid by Father Pierre Gibault. This sturdy priest already had some American leanings. As soon as he received assurance from Clark that his Church would be protected, he cast his powerful influence on the side of the American cause and became a valuable ally.

As soon as affairs were progressing satisfactorily at Kaskaskia, Clark turned his attention to Vincennes

on the Wabash, his chief objective from the start. Immediately after taking Kaskaskia, he sent Si Kenton with two other scouts to spy out the situation there, and later he sent Father Pierre Gibault and Dr. Jean Baptiste Lafont with a small company to Vincennes.

During the summer of 1778 the British had practically abandoned Fort Sackville at Vincennes, which was in a bad state of repair, and had left this post largely in charge of the Creoles, who had sworn allegiance to Great Britain. When Father Gibault and Dr. Lafont appeared among them with news of the situation at Kaskaskia and information of the French alliance, these Creoles were quickly induced to take the oath of allegiance to the American cause. Clark sent Captain Leonard Helm over to Vincennes to hold possession of Fort Sackville with the aid of the Creoles and to begin peace conferences with the Indians of the Wabash while he awaited Clark's coming.

From reports Clark received from Father Gibault and Captain Helm, all seemed ready for an easy occupancy of this much-desired post. But it was only the calm before the storm.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE BIG KNIFE AND THE INDIANS

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK'S most difficult task after taking Kaskaskia was to treat with the Indians of this section. This was indeed a risky job, for there were in this vast region of the Mississippi some fifteen or more powerful tribes of Indians, many of whom were in the pay of the British and bitterly hostile to the Big Knives. Their hostility was due both to British influence and to their own enmity toward any people encroaching upon their land. They did not feel so much enmity for the British or the Creoles as they did for the Americans. The British built army posts in this region, but they had no intention of settling at this time; in fact, the British government prohibited colonization of this territory. The Creoles were peaceful and unambitious; they made no attempt to extend their isolated settlements. But more and more Americans were coming to seize these lands and build permanent homes.

It is fitting to take some notice here of this great problem in the early colonization of America, which actually involved the passing of an Indian civilization. The history of mankind has little in the nature of drama that contains as much romance, pathos, and tragedy as is to be found in the story of the North American Indians. Perhaps the most unfortunate part of the tragic story is the injustice that was done this noble race, not only in the ill-usage they received but also in unjust reflections of history.

Surely the Indian should live in our history as the noble redman. Measured by his own standards and viewed in the softening light of time, he was the noble redman. It is true that the story of our pioneer life is marked by barbaric outrages. But what was to be expected? These Indians were savages, living in a state of nature. Their lands were taken from them. They suffered abuse and fraud and broken faith, for which they knew no answer but the firebrand, the tomahawk, and the scalping knife. The Indian, ever true to his own nature, simply defended his rights in the only way he knew. In the course of civilization, bloodshed was inevitable. The Indian had to go with the going of the wilderness and the wild deer; but we should judge him fairly, as the God of nature made him.

Clark had learned to know the Indians well. He saw and understood them as they really were — genuine children of nature. His successful dealings with them were due to his appreciation of the real character that lay deep within them. He knew them as simple people who should be handled in a straightforward manner. Clark was convinced that the British and colonial plan of dealing with Indians was wrong. Already he had had enlightening experience with them. His acquaintance with those noble chieftains, Logan, the Mingo, and Cornstalk, the Shawnee, had given him a first-hand view of their native greatness. He had also seen the Indians at their very worst during the bloodiest days in Old Kentucky. He understood that, in spite of their

natural savagery, they were true to a primitive nobility.

Clark did not believe in beginning an acquaintance with an Indian by giving him a present and calling him brother, when the redskin had a tomahawk in his hand and murder in his heart. This was the method the British used, but Clark determined to act differently. He said that the Indians of the Mississippi had not yet been spoiled by the white man, and that he did not intend to spoil them.

At Kaskaskia and Cahokia Clark was surrounded by thousands of Indians, waiting restlessly to see what advances would be made by the Big Knife who had suddenly appeared among them. Before taking any action, Clark got what information he could on the treaties which the British had made with the Indians. He studied the French and Spanish methods of dealing with the redskins, which had been more successful than the British methods.

Some of the Indians came to Kaskaskia to hold a conference with Clark. They wanted to shake hands with him, but he sternly refused, saying that it was time enough to give the hand when the heart could be given also. A day was appointed for a general conference and the Indians left him.

When the day for the council came, Clark was ready. He had no fire water with which to win the Indians, and he had no presents with which to bribe them. Instead, he appeared before them with a bloody red belt in one hand and a white belt in the other, and addressed them in the following fashion,

using figurative language after the manner of the Indians.

MEN AND WARRIORS, pay attention. You informed me yesterday that the Great Spirit had brought us together, which you hoped was good, as he is good. I also have the same hope; and whatever may be agreed upon by us at the present time, whether for peace or war, I expect each party will strictly adhere to and henceforward prove ourselves worthy of the attention of the Great Spirit.

I am a man and a warrior, not a councilor. I carry War in my right hand and in my left Peace. I was sent by the council fire of the Big Knives and their friends to take control of all the towns the English possess in this country, and to remain here watching the conduct of the redmen. I was sent to bloody the paths of those who continue the effort to stop the course of the rivers, but to clear the roads that lead from us to those who wish to be in friendship with us, in order that the women and children may walk in them without anything being in the way to strike their feet against; and to continue to call on the Great Fire for warriors enough to darken the land of those who are hostile to us, so that the inhabitants shall hear no sound in it but that of birds that live on blood.

I know that a mist is yet before your eyes. I will dispel the clouds in order that you may see clearly the cause of the war between the Big Knives and the English, that you may judge for yourselves which is in the right. Then if you are men and warriors, as you profess to be, prove it by adhering strictly to what you may now declare, without deceiving either party, and thus proving yourselves to be only old women.

The Big Knives are very much like the redmen. They do not know well how to make blankets, powder, and cloth; they buy these things from the English (from whom they formerly descended) and live chiefly by raising corn, hunt-

ing, and trading, as you and your neighbors the French do. But the Big Knives were daily becoming more numerous, like the trees in the woods, so that the land became poor and the hunting scarce, and having but little to trade with, the women began to cry to see their children naked, and tried to make clothes for themselves, and soon gave their husbands blankets of their own making. And the men learned to make guns and powder, so that they did not want so much from the English.

Then the English became angry and stationed strong garrisons through all our country (as you see they have done among you on the lakes and among the French) and would not let our women spin nor the men make powder, nor let us trade with anybody else. They said we must buy everything from them; and since we had become saucy, they would make us give them two bucks for a blanket that we used to get for one. They said we must do as they pleased, and they killed some of us to make the rest afraid.

This is the truth and the cause of the war between us, which did not begin until some time after they had treated us in this fashion. Our women and children were cold and hungry and continued to cry. Our young men were lost, and there were no counselors to set them in the right path. The whole land was dark, and the old men hung down their heads for shame, for they could not see the sun.

Thus there was mourning for many years. At last the Great Spirit took pity upon us and kindled a great council fire that never goes out, at a place called Philadelphia. He stuck down a post there and left a war tomahawk by it and went away. The sun at once broke out and the sky became blue. The old men held up their heads and assembled at the fire. They sharpened the hatchet and put it into the hands of the young men and told them to strike the English as long as they could find one on this side of the Great Water. The young men immediately struck the war post and blood ensued.

Thus the war began, and the English were driven from one place to another, until they became weak and hired you redmen to fight for them and help them.

The Great Spirit became angry at this, and caused your Old Father, the French king, and other great nations to join the Big Knives and fight with them against all their enemies, so that the English have become like a deer in the woods. From this you may see that it is the Great Spirit that caused your waters to be troubled, because you fought for the people he was angry with; and if your women and children should cry, you must blame yourselves for it, and not the Big Knives.

You can now judge who is in the right. I have already told you who I am. Here is a bloody belt and a white one. Take whichever you please. Behave like men and don't let your present situation, being surrounded by the Big Knives, cause you to take up the one belt with your hands when your hearts drink up the other.

If you take the bloody path, you shall go from this town in safety and join your friends, the English; and we will try, like warriors, who can put the most stumbling blocks in the road and keep our clothes perfumed with blood the longest. If you should take the path of peace and now be received as brothers to the Big Knives and the French, and should hereafter listen to bad birds that will be flying through your land, you will no longer be counted as men but as persons with two tongues, who ought to be destroyed without listening to what you say, as nobody could understand you.

Since I am convinced that you have never heard the truth before, I do not wish you to give me an answer before you have had time to council if you wish to do this. We will part this evening, and when you are ready, if the Great Spirit will bring us together again, let us prove ourselves worthy by speaking and thinking with but one heart and one tongue.



Clark in council with the Indians. Mural painting in the state capitol at Springfield, Illinois.

The chieftains listened to this address with grave attention. It did more service than a regiment of men could have done. Colonel Clark had complimented their intelligence and sincerity by telling them the truth about the war, and he had satisfied their pride as warriors by his defiant courage. They went into a protracted powwow. On the next day the Indians kindled the council fire and presented the white belt. The sacred pipe of peace was passed around the entire circle of Indian chiefs and to Clark himself.

The Indians made a dignified answer. They said they believed that all the words the Great Spirit had put into the heart of the Big White Chief to say to them were true, since he did not speak like any other people they had heard. His sentiments were those of a man who had but one heart and did not speak with a double tongue. They now saw plainly that they had been deceived by the English, who had told them lies and never the truth. They were ready to be friends with the Big Knives, and would call in all their warriors and cast the tomahawk into the river, where it could never be found again. They would no longer suffer bad birds to pass through their land, but they would smooth the roads of their brothers, the Big Knives, whenever they should come to see them. Then the pipe was again lighted, and after much smoking and handshaking, the important business of the day came to an impressive close.

This was only a beginning, but a most favorable

one indeed. The Spaniards across the Mississippi exerted a friendly influence with some of the tribes, and of course the Creoles, now stanch friends of the Americans, gave some timely aid. For many months Clark had to continue his dealings with the Indians in the region of Kaskaskia and Cahokia, moving with scanty protection among thousands of treacherous warriors, whom he dominated by his masterful personality. When he appeared before them he was always firm and commanding, and he gave them strong words for want of a strong force. He said that nothing so quickly deadens the interest of the Indians as weak and wavering sentiments, and nothing impresses them more favorably than positive and forceful words and bearing.

One night after a council meeting with several tribes at Cahokia, Clark was lying awake, "having too many things to think about to sleep much." About one o'clock in the morning he heard a suspicious noise. Instantly on the alert, he made an investigation and found some Indians prowling about. With the help of the guard, he took them prisoners. The intruders were a small party of roving Puans, known as the Meadow Indians, who had tried to capture Colonel Clark in the hope of getting a great reward. They were thrown into the guard house and the chiefs of the party were put in irons. In this condition they were brought each day before the council, but they were not permitted to speak.

After Clark had finished his business with all the other tribes who had come to the council, he sum-

moned the Puan chiefs and took off their irons. He told them that they ought to die; but because of their meanness in trying to catch a bear asleep, he had decided that they were only old squaws, who did not deserve to be killed by a Big Knife. He told them that they ought to be punished for putting on breech cloths, which would now be taken away from them. If they wished to go home, food would be given them, as women did not know how to hunt; but as long as they remained at Cahokia, they were to be treated as "all squaws ought to be."

This treatment humiliated the repentant braves. They offered a belt and a pipe of peace. Clark broke the pipe with his sword and said that Big Knives never treated with squaws. The chiefs of other tribes then pleaded for their erring red brothers, saying they were confident the Big Knife was above little things and would take pity on the families of these men and grant them peace. Finally two young Puan braves advanced to the middle of the floor, sat down, and offered themselves to the tomahawk as a sacrifice to atone for the guilt of their tribe. This affected Clark deeply. He made a glowing speech to the multitude. After telling the young warriors to rise, he said that they were the kind of men he liked to treat with. Then he took them by the hand as his brothers and chiefs of their nation. He required all present to greet them as chiefs and had them saluted by the garrison. From this time on these young braves were treated as nabobs on all occasions. By his firmness in this situation

Clark greatly strengthened his hold upon all the Indians.

These councils with the Indians were usually conducted with great dignity and formality. The Indians loved ceremony and seemed to attach great importance to forms and symbols of all kinds.

There was one striking departure, however, from these ceremonial customs. This was in Clark's interview with Saguina, a chief of the Chippewas, who was known as Mr. Black Bird. He was a powerful chief at the head of considerable bands of warriors about St. Joseph, who were then at war, and he had great influence with all the Indians throughout that region. He sent Clark a letter, but did not come to the council.

Clark was informed by some traders that Black Bird really wanted a conference but wished to have an invitation. So Clark sent to this dignitary a courteous letter inviting him to come to Kaskaskia. Attended by a small guard of only eight warriors, he came immediately with Clark's returning messenger.

As soon as he was rested and refreshed, Black Bird announced that he was ready for business, and that as his business was of considerable consequence to both nations, he did not desire to spend time in ceremony. He requested that the usual preparations for an Indian council be dispensed with, as this was not necessary between Clark and himself. They could do business better sitting at a table. He wanted much conversation.

Mr. Black Bird was introduced by a French gentleman and assumed all the airs of a polite nobleman. After a few brief compliments, he took his seat at one end of the table, with Clark at the other end and interpreters on both sides. Prominent gentlemen were seated about the room.

Black Bird opened the conversation by saying that he had long wished to talk with a real chief of the Big Knives and this was his first opportunity. He said he had no confidence in what prisoners told him, as they were generally afraid to speak, and although he had engaged in the war on the side of the English, he had always entertained some doubt about the propriety of it. He had heard only one side. There were some things which seemed mysterious to him and he now wished to have them explained fully.

He asked many questions in a pointed and pertinent way. Clark had to go through almost the whole history of the colonies, from the first settlement of America, in order to satisfy this sagacious Indian. He could not talk to Black Bird in similes and figures, as he did to the other Indians, and it took him nearly a half day to satisfy the inquiring disposition of this open-minded native.

After having considered every point at length, Black Bird said that he was satisfied and was convinced that the English had been deceiving the Indians and wished to keep them in the dark, as he had long suspected. He was now certain that the Americans were perfectly right. He was glad to find that his old friends, the French, had joined the Americans

and he thought the Indians ought to do likewise. He said he would not blame Clark if he drove off the face of the earth all those who did not join him, "for it was plain to him that the English were afraid; otherways they would not give so many goods as they did, for the Indians to fight for them."

His sentiments, he said, were now fixed in favor of the Americans and he would no longer pay any attention to the English, but would immediately cease taking part in the war. He asked Clark to excuse the fact that many of his young men were then out in their war paint. As soon as they returned, he would make them lay down their weapons, and he would see to it that not one of them should again take up arms against the Americans.

Upon his request, Clark sent a messenger with him on his return, to help explain the true cause of the war and to urge the Indians of every tribe to become friends of the Big Knives.

Clark heard from Black Bird often during the following year and found that he adhered strictly to what he had promised. He not only held his own tribe from war, but he influenced great numbers of Indians in that region, so that they became very cool towards British efforts.

It was Clark's policy to make all the Indians understand that he did not blame them for receiving whatever presents the British chose to give them, but that it was degrading to them to make war as hirelings. Such actions were beneath the dignity of real warriors. He told them that the Big Knife had

much respect for those who made war against him on their own account, but none for the hirelings.

Another interesting incident deserves special mention. Among the Indians who attended the councils was a warrior named Lajes, who had announced his coming by a letter to Clark. Lajes was called Big Gate because, when only a boy, during the siege of Detroit by Pontiac, he had shot and killed a soldier standing by a gate of the fort. He had now become a famous chief and warrior. Clark had learned all about the importance of Big Gate and he was prepared to use some strategy in dealing with the celebrated warrior.

Big Gate attended the council in complete war dress, wearing around his neck a bloody belt that he had received from the British. For several days Clark affected not to notice him, as he gravely came and went in the formality of the councils. The chief always placed himself at the front of the room and sat in great state, without saying a word to anyone. At length, at a favorable moment, Clark addressed him personally. He said that he had not spoken to Big Gate sooner because among white people it was customary "that when officers met in this manner, even though they were enemies, they treated each other with greater respect than they did common people, and esteemed each other the more in proportion to the exploits each had performed against the other's nation." He then invited Big Gate to dine with him that evening in a special council of the Big Knives.

Apparently this was the opportunity for which Big Gate had been waiting, and he delivered himself in characteristic fashion. Stepping to the middle of the room, he removed his war belt, took a British flag from his breast, and threw both the belt and the flag on the floor. Then he proceeded to take off his clothing, except the breech cloth, and stamp upon the discarded flag and regalia. He struck his breast and began an address to the entire audience, telling them that he was a warrior and they knew he had been a warrior from his youth.

Clark summarized this speech in his own words as follows: "He said that he delighted in war, but the English had told him lies. He thought from what they said that the Big Knives were in the wrong. He had been to war against them three times and was ready to go again, but concluded he would rest himself for a while and come and see what sort of people they were and hear how they talked. He had listened to everything that had been said and was now convinced that the English were wrong and the Big Knives right. He said that, as a man and a warrior, he would not fight in a wrong cause; that he had flung away the bloody clothes the English had given him. Giving them a kick across the room, he struck his breast and, saying that he was now a Big Knife, came and shook hands with me and the whole company, as his brothers. A great deal of merriment ensued."

Since Big Gate was now practically naked, Clark induced Captain McCarty to present him with a suit



General Hamilton and his aides in conference with leaders of the Chippewas, allies of the British, near Detroit in 1777. From "Vincennes," one of the *Chronicles of America Photoplays*. Copyright. By permission of Yale University Press.

gaudy with gold lace, which made him the finest man at the table. Impressed with his new dignity, the chief ordered some of his warriors to wait upon him. The dinner turned out to be a most unusual and lively affair, and this new brother proved to be a merry companion.

After the dinner Big Gate said that he wished to have a private conversation with Colonel Clark, and he pointed to a room which had a large window opening into a back street. Clark was somewhat suspicious that his new brother intended to stab him and make his escape through the window, but he arranged for an interview. Big Gate then told Clark more about himself and about the situation at the British headquarters in Detroit. The chief offered to go to Detroit and bring back, within forty days, a scalp or a prisoner. Clark replied that he would be pleased to receive any information Big Gate might give, but that he did not wish the Indians to fight for him.

As tokens of his esteem, Colonel Clark presented the chief with a medal and a captain's commission. Captain Big Gate returned home and Clark never saw him again. But he often heard favorable reports of the chief as "always speaking much of his new dignities and abusing other Indians for fighting as hirelings."

While these dealings with the Indians of the Mississippi valley were progressing satisfactorily, advances were made to the Indians of the Wabash through Captain Helm at Vincennes. Clark sent

them the following picturesque message setting forth his purpose :

You Indians living on the Wabash ! We are not come with design to take your lands from you. We only desire to pass through your country to Detroit, to turn out your Father who is there ; for your late Father, the King of France, is come to life, and will recover the country he lost to the English. Here are several belts for you to consider. A white one for the French, a red one for the Spanish, a blue one in the name of the Colonies, a green one offering peaceable terms for the Americans, and lastly a red one offering war, if you prefer that. We desire that you leave a very wide road for us, as we are many in number and love to have room enough for our march ; for, in swinging our arms as we walk, we may chiance to hurt some of your young people with our swords.

In a village near Vincennes lived the great chief of the Piankeshaws, who was called Tobacco's Son. Among the Indians he was known as the Grand Door to the Wabash. He took a great liking to Captain Helm and was a sincere admirer of Colonel Clark. During the later troubles around Vincennes, on the occasion of a bit of treachery by the Delawares of White River, this chief showed himself to be a friend of true metal.

In violation of their treaties, the Delawares had begun to trouble the whites and had even attacked and killed a party of traders. Colonel Clark, realizing that harsh methods must be used, ordered that war be made on this tribe, and that no mercy be shown their warriors. As he refused all friendly relations with the Delawares, the other Indians of the

region held a council and considered methods of restoring friendship between Clark and the Delawares.

The Piankeshaws took it upon themselves to answer for the good conduct of the Delawares in the future, and Tobacco's Son gave the offending tribe a severe arraignment. He told them that he had given them permission to settle that country but not to kill his friends, and that they richly deserved the treatment they were getting from the Big Knives. He was now ready to become security for their good conduct, but if they did any more mischief, he would see that they were punished in a proper manner. As he said this, he pointed to the sacred bow which he held in his hand. He could have done nothing more impressive than that. This bow was the most sacred of all Indian emblems, except the peace pipe. It was decorated with eagle tail feathers and heavily hung with gaudy trinkets. At one end was a spear about six inches long, dipped in blood. Only chiefs of the greatest dignity could touch it. By this gesture Tobacco's Son gave the Delawares to understand that if they again disturbed the whites he himself would attend to their punishment.

Later this lordly chief of the Piankeshaws made George Rogers Clark a deed of gift to a magnificent estate in southern Indiana. It was his wish that Clark should build a great wigwam upon it for his home. The deed set out definitely the boundaries of this estate and warranted that the land "shall hereafter and ever be the sole property of our great



General Clark signing a treaty with the Indians. From the painting by Arthur Thomas in the Seelbach Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky. Courtesy of Mr. William Seelbach.

father with all things thereto belonging, either above or below the earth, shall be and is his, except a road through said land to his door, which shall remain ours, and for us to walk on to speak to our father. All nations from the rising to the setting sun, who are not in alliance with us, are hereby warned to esteem the said gift and not to make that land taste of blood; that all people either at peace or war may repair in safety to get counsel of our father. Whoever first darkens that land shall no longer have a name." Colonel Clark accepted this estate, as he said, in trust for Virginia, whom he served.

After the fall of Vincennes the Indian tribes of this region continued to be divided in their allegiance; some favored the British and others were ready to help the Americans. Clark maintained a firm and

uniform policy toward all the tribes. As the Indians of the Lakes looked upon the British general, Hamilton, as almost a god, the fact that Clark conquered him at Vincennes filled them with great respect for the Americans. After several councils at Vincennes, Clark sent the following speech to tribes near the Lakes that were still unfriendly :

MEN AND WARRIORS — It is a long time since the Big Knives sent belts of peace among you, soliciting of you not to listen to the bad talk and deceit of the English, as it would, at some future day, tend to the destruction of your nations. You would not listen, but joined the English against the Big Knives and spilled much blood of women and children.

The Big Knives then resolved to show no mercy to any people that hereafter would refuse the belt of peace which should be offered, at the same time one of war. You remember last summer a great many people took me by the hand, but a few kept back their hearts. I also sent belts of peace and war among the nations to take their choice; some took the peace belt, others still listened to their great father (as they call him) at Detroit, and joined him to come to war against me. The Big Knives are warriors and look on the English as old women, and all those that join him; and are ashamed when they fight them, because they are no men.

I now send two belts to all the nations, one for peace and the other for war. The one that is for war has your great English father's scalp tied to it, and made red with his blood. All you that call yourselves his children, make your hatchets sharp, and come out and revenge his blood on the Big Knives. Fight like men, that the Big Knives may not be ashamed when they fight you — that the old women may not tell us that we only fought squaws.

If any of you are for taking the belt of peace, send the bloody belt back to me, that I may know whom to take by the hand as brothers; for you may be assured that no peace, for the future, will be granted to those that do not lay down their arms immediately. It is as you will. I do not care whether you are for peace or war, as I glory in war and want enemies to fight us, as the English cannot fight us any longer, and are become like young children, begging the Big Knives for mercy and a little bread to eat.

This is the last speech you may ever expect from the Big Knives; the next thing will be the tomahawk. And you may expect, in four moons, to see your women and children given to the dogs to eat, while those nations that have kept their words with me will flourish and grow like the willow trees on the river banks, under the care and nourishment of their father, the Big Knives.

The Indians understood and admired George Rogers Clark. Their admiration was a sincere tribute to him, for the Indians seemed to appreciate really great characters, such as La Salle, Washington, Jackson, and Clark. They knew how to estimate a man and a warrior; and although Clark punished them mercilessly when they were in arms against him, they recognized the justice of all his dealings with them.

This admiration was extended throughout his life, beyond his days as a warrior. When the famous chief of the Delawares, Buckongehelas, first met Clark at a peace conference in 1785, his expression was characteristic of the views of the Indians of that day. He stalked into the council chamber, disregarding everybody else present. Walking up to the table where George Rogers Clark sat, he seized

him by the hand and, swelling up like the big Indian that he was, addressed him in these words: "I thank the Great Spirit for this day having brought together two such great warriors as Buckongehelas and General Clark."

This was the natural expression of a proud and somewhat self-exalting son of nature. It was just what he thought and felt, and it was sincere and true. The historian Dawson, who relates the incident, says of this fighting Delaware: "He had all the qualifications of a hero. No Christian knight was ever more scrupulous in performing all his engagements than the renowned Buckongehelas."

After Clark had ceased to lead armies, it was said of him that the influence of his name in an expedition against the Indians "was worth half a regiment of men."

The conquest of the West was primarily a conquest of the red children of the forest, who made their homes there. It was mainly because of the Indians that the British were formidable in the West. Clark's highest bid to fame was his adroit treatment of the Indians. He proved that even in dealing with savages, the art of the diplomat goes before the strength of the warrior.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FOEMEN OF STEEL

AT this period when George Rogers Clark was invading the British western territory, the British leaders were planning a vigorous offensive from the West, which would help their campaign in the East. Until 1778 the Indians were used principally to harass the settlements and to prevent further spread of colonization in the Central West. At this stage of the Revolutionary War, plans were formed for a more general use of the Indians as an important part of the British military program through the whole country.

Prior to the conception of Clark's bold scheme, there had been no American plan of operations in the West. Various projects against Detroit had been proposed and abandoned because of lack of men and means. The western settlements had simply held on as best they could in a very discouraging defensive warfare.

Now in conjunction with the main campaign in the East, the British western forces in 1778 planned a general offensive, whereby a strong body of their troops, aided by a much stronger body of Indians, both north and south, was to demolish Kentucky completely, take Pittsburgh, and overrun the Allegheny frontier.

This important movement was in charge of Henry Hamilton, lieutenant governor at Detroit. He was directing Great Britain's most important military

plans and Indian affairs between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi. Henry Hamilton was a soldier, a statesman, and a diplomat. To him had been given the key to British domination in the Central West. In him were vested the weighty responsibilities of maintaining British sway over that valued region. He was well qualified for the part. His most difficult task was that of handling the Indians, and in this field he seemed to be a thorough master, according to English methods of that day. He was subject to the governor of Quebec, but he was given large discretionary powers, which he used with great self-reliance and independence.

On June 14, 1778, while Colonel Clark was drilling his men on Corn Island preparatory to his campaign against Kaskaskia, General Hamilton held a great war council at Detroit, which was attended by over sixteen hundred chiefs and warriors from the leading Indian nations between the Ohio and the Great Lakes. He opened the council with the following speech :

CHILDREN! — Ottawas, Chippewas, Hurons, Pottawatomies, Shawnees, Delawares, and others. — Let us before all things return thanks to the Great Spirit above, who has permitted us to meet together this day. With these strings of wampum I open your eyes, that you may see clear and your ears may listen to my words, since I speak by order of the Great King, who is the Father of us all, whether white or brown skins. For myself, I shall never forget the manner in which you have acted since I have resided among you, nor the good will with which you

took up your Father's ax, striking as one man his enemies and yours, the Rebels. . . .

You may remember, when you received a large belt of alliance here last year, the number of nations who took hold of it. You know the consequences have been good, as you have succeeded in almost all of your enterprises, having taken a number of prisoners and a far greater number of scalps. You have forced them from the frontiers to the coast. . . . Some Delawares are this day arrived, who are desirous of showing their intentions of joining their brethren, and have presented me with two pieces of dried meat [scalps], one of which I have given the Chippewas, another to the Miamis, that they may show in their village the disposition of the Delawares.

At this council plans were made for a general gathering of all the Indian tribes from the Cherokees and Chickasaws on the south to the Menominees and Ottawas on the north, to be held on the Ohio River at the mouth of the Tennessee, in the spring of 1779. This was to be the beginning of a great Indian invasion of the inner frontiers of the eastern colonies.

While these great purposes were in progress, information reached General Hamilton at Detroit of the falling of Kaskaskia and of Clark's intention to attack Vincennes. Hamilton did not change his plans, after hearing this news, except that he decided to act more quickly and to go directly to Vincennes. He did not seem to feel especially alarmed at Clark's project. Apparently he regarded the frontiersman as an adventurous upstart who had succeeded, with a mongrel band, in a temporary raid. He made the mistake of thinking that this pioneer band could be scattered easily by the British regulars.



"The steady tread of the grenadiers" — the Royal Redcoats marching through the wilderness. Scene from a motion picture, "Winners of the West." Courtesy of Universal Pictures Corporation.

Hamilton organized an army, variously estimated at from five hundred to eight hundred men, consisting of a detachment of Royal Redcoats from the King's Own Regiment, a body of Detroit volunteers, two companies of militia, a detachment of artillery, and a large force of Indians. The Indian auxiliary varied in strength from time to time along the way, as bands were sent on special missions and as other bands joined the army in its progress down the Wabash. It seems to be generally agreed that the main body of Hamilton's army consisted of about six hundred men.

When the army was about ready to start, the Indians were assembled at a great war dance, at

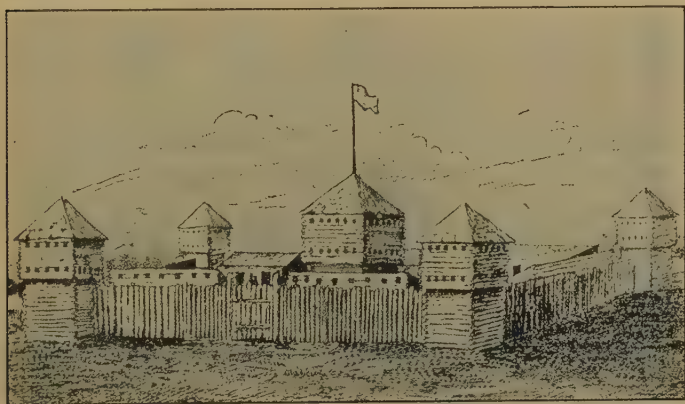
which Governor Hamilton himself sang the war song. His officers joined in the wild preparations and ceremonies with which this campaign began.

On October 7, 1778, after the French priest had given absolution to the soldiers and had invoked divine blessing upon the enterprise, Hamilton and his army set forth from Detroit. They went in boats down the Detroit River and then crossed the end of Lake Erie, about thirty-six miles, to the mouth of the Maumee River. They proceeded up the Maumee to Post Miami at the present site of Fort Wayne. At that important center of the great Miami confederacy, on October twenty-fourth a council was held with the principal tribes of this region.

Hamilton gave these Indians of the Wabash many presents and promises and started them out on hostile excursions against the Americans. He also made further plans for the general gathering at the mouth of the Tennessee in the spring. His army crossed the portage at Post Miami, some seven or nine miles to the waters of the Wabash, and then proceeded through the length and breadth of what is now Indiana, down the Wabash River. The water was very low at this time of the year, and at some points they were able to pass only by cutting the beaver dams so that the rush of the water would carry the boats along. It was a difficult trip for their heavy pirogues (long canoe-like boats), with 97,000 pounds of provisions and stores to be transported over the carrying places. They made many stops at Indian villages along the way, including those at the mouth

of the Mississinnewa and Tippecanoe rivers. Notwithstanding all the difficulties of the trip, Hamilton made the arduous journey of six hundred miles in seventy-two days. His army attacked Vincennes on December 17, 1778.

The scouts upon whom Captain Helm had relied for information of the coming of enemies were captured, and he was taken by surprise. The fickle Creoles of the town immediately fell away from Helm, and he was left almost unsupported in a fort which was in a very bad state of defense. Hamilton's army was within three miles of Fort Sackville before Helm knew that they were at hand. With the enemy almost in sight, he wrote the following letter to Clark and sent it by a messenger. The messenger was killed the next day and the letter was taken to Hamilton. It is now in the Canadian archives.



Fort Sackville at Vincennes. Engraved from an old drawing.

DEAR SIR — At this time there is an army within three miles of this place; I heard of their coming several days beforehand. I sent spies to find the certainty — the spies being taken prisoners, I never got intelligence till they got within three miles of the town. As I had called the militia and had all assurances of their integrity, I ordered at the firing of a cannon every man to appear, but I saw but few. Captain Buseron behaved much to his honor and credit, but I doubt the conduct of a certain gent. Excuse haste as the army is in sight. My determination is to defend the garrison, though I have but twenty-one men but what has left me. I refer you to Mr. Wmes (?) for the rest. The army is in three hundred yards of village. You must think how I feel; not four men that I can really depend upon; but I am determined to act brave — think of my condition. I know it is out of my power to defend the town, as not one of the militia will take arms, though before sight of the army no braver men. There is a flag at a small distance. I must conclude.

Your humble servant,
LEO'D HELM
Must stop.

Captain Helm made a brave show of defense, and with only one faithful lieutenant to support him, he trained one of the cannon in the gate of the fort. He did not surrender until he was assured of receiving the honors of war.

General Hamilton took charge of Fort Sackville and immediately began putting it in a perfect state of repair. He knew how to build a fort and how to defend a fort. He “built a guard house, barracks for four companies, sunk a well, erected two large blockhouses of oak, and embrasures above for five

pieces of cannon each, altered and lined the stockades, and laid the fort with gravel."

Thus Hamilton made of this little wilderness fort a genuine defense for a wilderness situation. He settled himself here and throughout the winter he continued his preparations for the great Indian campaign in the spring. The rigors of further campaigning in the dead of winter did not appeal to him, but as soon as spring came he intended to cross Illinois and crush Colonel Clark at Kaskaskia.

He compelled the Creoles of Vincennes again to take an oath of allegiance to Great Britain. They had to declare solemnly that in giving allegiance to the Americans they had forgotten their "duty towards God and failed towards men." A small band of young men, among whom was a younger brother of Father Gibault, refused to take this oath. Hamilton showed a strange lack of diplomacy in dealing with these people. He felt contempt for them because of their "treachery and ingratitude" and was especially violent in his denunciation of Father Gibault.

- Hamilton made a census of population, reporting that there were six hundred and twenty-one inhabitants, of whom two hundred and seventeen were fit to bear arms. This count did not include several who were away hunting buffalo for their winter provisions.

He sent most of the volunteers back to Detroit, dispatched large numbers of Indian parties on marauding expeditions, and retained the Royal Redcoats for the defense of the fort. Captain Helm was



General Hamilton (cloaked) and his prisoner, Captain Helm (with arm extended), watching the departure of some of Hamilton's Indian allies from Fort Sackville. Helm asks Hamilton, in jest, whether the Indians are leaving him for good. From "Vincennes," one of the *Chronicles of America* Photoplays. Copyright. By permission of Yale University Press.

held as a prisoner of war and was treated kindly. Helm was a genial fellow, who could make a good toddy, and he and Hamilton became boon companions.

In the meantime Hamilton followed out his policy of arousing and renewing among the Indians a violent hostility towards the Americans. Most of them took arms against the Big Knives, although it must be said that some of these tribes remained true to their treaties with Clark and Helm.

It has always been a point of contention between American and English historians as to the extent to which the English used the Indians in their war policy. English authors have denied that Hamilton ever bought scalps outright with money, but the evidence seems almost conclusive that he did, or that his method of encouraging and rewarding the Indians amounted to the same thing as actually paying for scalps. He has been quite generally denounced as "the hair-buyer general."

Hamilton was provided with almost unlimited powers and provisions for dealing with the Indians. For example, the cost of one council with the Indians at Detroit was 34,000 pounds, which did not include the important items of rum and rations. For the single year of 1778 Hamilton received money drafts in New York currency to the amount of 79,105 pounds. The money drafts paid at Detroit for the conduct of the western war totaled 433,698 pounds, which was probably but a fraction of the actual expense, since provisions were handled directly rather

than through exchange with money. What a contrast this is with Clark's 1200 pounds of Virginia currency for the conquest of the West!

Hamilton's "first and great object was to keep the Indians firm in the king's interest." He had authority and he did not hesitate to use it. Even if he had desired to regulate and restrain Indian atrocities, it would have been impossible for him to have done so while he was at the same time encouraging their activity against the Americans. The scalps which the Indians brought to British headquarters were the best evidence of effective warfare and undoubtedly became an important basis of reward. It was this policy which William Pitt protested against so eloquently in the British Parliament as associating "to our arms the tomahawk and scalping knife of the savage."

The unprotected settlements of Kentucky — defenseless except for the small but heroic bands of riflemen — were harassed more savagely than ever. It was one of Hamilton's Indian bands that captured Daniel Boone and twenty-seven of his men at Blue Licks in February, 1778. The winter of 1778-79, more than any of the previous bloody years, was darkened with the war cloud of savage hostility. All was in readiness for a terrific onslaught against the inner frontiers of the East. According to Hamilton's plans, the colonies would be crushed between the king's forces on the coast and the king's allies on the frontiers, like grain between remorseless millstones.

CHAPTER NINE

THE DESPERATE DILEMMA

WHEN Clark learned of Hamilton's campaign, he realized that the situation was indeed desperate. His men had enlisted for only three months and that period was ended. He had no authority to reënlist them and no funds with which to pay them. He was without money and supplies, and many of his men had gone home. He had not received information or aid of any kind from Virginia since he had left there over a year before, and he knew he could not expect reinforcements from that quarter.

Definite rumors of Hamilton's coming to Kaskaskia first reached Clark while he was making a trip to Cahokia. It was then that an attempt was made to capture him by a special scouting party, which Hamilton had sent out for that purpose. He had stopped with a small escort at La Prairie du Rocher, where the inhabitants assembled at a ball for the entertainment of Clark and his company. About midnight a messenger arrived with the information that Governor Hamilton with eight hundred men was within three miles of Kaskaskia and intended to attack the fort that night.

Clark's own account of this experience in a letter to Mason gives a vivid picture.

Mr. Hamilton, in meantime, had sent a party of forty savages, headed by white men from St. Vincent [Vincennes], in order, if possible, to take me prisoner, and gave such instructions for my treatment as did him no dishonor.

This party lay concealed, keeping a small party near the road to see who passed. They lay by a small branch about three miles from Kaskaskia — there being snow on the ground. I had a guard of about six or seven men, and a few gentlemen in chairs; one of them swamped within one hundred yards of the place where these fellows lay hid, where we had to delay upwards of an hour. I believe nothing here saved me but the instructions they had not to kill, or the fear of being overpowered, not having an opportunity to alarm the main body, which lay half a mile off, without being discovered themselves.

We arrived safe at the town of La Prairie du Rocher, about twelve miles above Kaskaskia. The gentlemen and ladies immediately assembled at a ball for our entertainment. We spent the fore part of the night very agreeably. But about 12 o'clock there was a very sudden change by an express arriving, informing us that Governor Hamilton was within three miles of Kaskaskia with eight hundred men, and was determined to attack the fort that night, which was expected would be before the express got to me. It seems that those fellows were discovered by a hunter, and after missing their aim on me, discovered themselves to a party of negroes and told them such a story as suited their purpose.

I never saw greater confusion among a small assembly than was at that time, every person having their eyes on me as if my word was to determine their good or evil fate. It required but a moment's hesitation in me to form my resolutions; communicated them to two of my officers who accompanied me, which they approved of. I ordered our horses saddled in order, if possible, to get into the fort before the attack could be made. Those of the company who had recovered their surprise, so far as to enable them to speak, begged of me not to attempt to return; that the town was certainly in possession of the enemy, and the fort warmly attacked. Some proposed conveying me to the Spanish shore, some one thing and some another.

I thanked them for the care they had of my person, and told them it was the fate of war; that a good soldier never ought to be afraid of his life where there was a probability of his doing service by venturing of it, which was my case; that I hoped that they would not let the news spoil our diversion sooner than was necessary; that we divert ourselves until our horses were ready; forced them to dance and endeavored to appear as unconcerned as if no such thing was in agitation. This conduct inspired the young men in such a manner that many of them were getting their horses to share fate with me.

But, choosing to lose no time, as soon as I could write a few lines on the back of my letter to Captain Bowman, at Cohos [Cahokia], I set out for Kaskaskia. Each man took a blanket so that in case the fort was attacked, we were to wrap ourselves in them, fall in with the enemy, fire at the fort until we had an opportunity of getting so near as to give the proper signals, knowing that we would be let in.

Clark and his men reached Kaskaskia safely that night and secretly entered the fort. The Kaskaskians were in a terrible state of fright and were ready to do almost anything for their own safety — even to abandon their homes and to cross the Mississippi to Spanish protection, or submit again to the British. Clark gave them a lecture “suitable for a set of traitors,” and ordered them to bring provisions and supplies into the fort. He then set fire to some of the houses nearest the fort, intending to clear an open space so that he could make a better defense. These preparations impressed the Kaskaskians and they quickly rallied to the defense of the fort.

To relieve the consternation of Father Gibault, who had much reason to fear Hamilton, Clark sent him to St. Louis with some public papers and money for the Spaniards. The "ice was passing so thick down the Mississippi" when he attempted to cross, attended by only one servant, that the priest was obliged to encamp for three days on an obscure island, where he suffered great hardship.

Hamilton did not come, however, and on January twenty-ninth Clark learned that he did not expect to march upon them until spring. Francis Vigo, a Spanish trader who had just returned from Vincennes, brought this news and gave information about the whole situation at Fort Sackville.

Vigo was a remarkable character. He was a very successful trader, with headquarters at St. Louis, and he conducted considerable business at Kaskaskia and Vincennes. On a trip to Vincennes in the latter part of December, he was captured by a party of Indians and taken to General Hamilton at the fort. There he learned about the forces and the plans of Hamilton. He was finally released on condition that he would do nothing to injure the British cause "during his journey home." He went directly to Kaskaskia. There, having reached home without having done anything to injure the British cause, he felt that he had kept his promise. He went to Colonel Clark and gave all the information needed. Francis Vigo continued to make himself invaluable in many ways. He helped Clark get supplies and provisions by accepting Virginia currency which was

then almost worthless and by indorsing bills of credit. In this way he impoverished himself for the good of the American cause.

With the certainty that Hamilton did not intend to attack Kaskaskia during the winter, the situation resolved itself into a very definite dilemma. Clark knew that if he remained at Kaskaskia, Hamilton with his vastly superior numbers could cross Illinois and crush him in the spring. His force was too small to stand a siege and he was too remote from Virginia to expect assistance. He was much farther from Virginia than Hamilton was from British headquarters at Detroit. "It was at this moment," he said, "I would have bound myself seven years a slave to have had five hundred troops."

It was in this crisis that George Rogers Clark decided on a course more desperate than any he had yet attempted. He determined to take advantage of the situation and risk everything on a single battle. He would take all the authority necessary, organize what army he could, and then cross Illinois and attack Hamilton at Vincennes. As soon as he had made this decision, Clark wrote to Governor Henry of his plans.

Here is a rare instance of what may seem to be a coincidence in inspired utterances and actions of famous men. It is not known whether Clark knew of Patrick Henry's immortal speech of three years before, which had helped to inspire the colonists to a declaration of war against Great Britain. His brother Jonathan, nearest him in age and his lifelong



Colonel Clark holds a council of war in the old mission house at Kaskaskia. His officers feel that the project to take Vincennes during the winter is an impossible one, but Clark insists that he will carry it out. From "Vincennes," one of the Chronicles of America Photoplays. Copyright. By permission of Yale University Press.

chum, was a member of that Virginia Revolutionary Convention and heard the famous speech of Patrick Henry in the historic little church at Richmond. In these confident words, he answered the fears of those who held that we were too weak to cope with so formidable an adversary as mighty Britain :

We shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave.

During this winter of 1778 the aid of Lafayette and the French alliance, and the vigilance and courage of Washington, were proving the prophetic truth of Patrick Henry's words. It remained for George Rogers Clark, out in the western wilderness, to add further truth to the prophecy. In the same spirit of patriotic daring in which Patrick Henry had spoken, Clark now wrote him at some length of his determination. He said in part :

I know the case is desperate, but, sir, we must either quit the country or attack Mr. Hamilton. No time is to be lost. Was I sure of a reinforcement, I should not attempt it. Who knows what fortune will do for us? Great things have been effected by a few men well conducted. Perhaps we may be fortunate. We have this consolation; that our cause is just and that our country will be grateful and not condemn our conduct in case we fail, though, if so, this country as well as Kentucky, I believe, is lost.

Having decided on his course, Clark devoted all his thought and effort to putting it into immediate effect. He said that "he was sensible that the resolution was as desperate as the situation, but he saw no other opportunity of securing the country." He quickly inspired confidence in his soldiers. There were few, if any, people at Kaskaskia who believed it would be possible even to reach Vincennes in the dead of winter, with Indians rising in hostility all around. Yet such was the masterful leadership of Clark that he soon had his officers and his men talking and acting as if the taking of Vincennes were a certainty.

Clark succeeded also in inspiring enthusiasm among the Creoles. The Creole maidens first came to his aid and persuaded a number of the more daring young men to volunteer. Day and night Clark devoted all his energy of mind and body to the organization of an army. The exact number of men whom he was able to enlist has never been positively determined, but reliable authorities now give it as approximately one hundred and seventy, all told.¹

To outfit the expedition, he endorsed bills of credit drawn on Virginia. Liberal support was extended by some of the Creoles and especially by Francis Vigo. Considerable supplies were sent him up the Mississippi from New Orleans by Oliver Pollock, who was the financial agent of the Continental Congress and of Virginia at that port. Pollock

¹ The highest estimate in any account is forty-six on the *Willing* and one hundred and seventy in the land force.

accepted bills drawn upon Virginia in payment for these supplies.

On February fourth a Mississippi River boat, the *Willing*, was launched with forty men on board, two cannon, four swivels, and the bulk of the ammunition for the expedition. The plan was that this boat should go down the Mississippi, then up the Ohio and the Wabash, and attack Fort Sackville at Vincennes with the cannon from the river, when Clark was ready to act with his force on land.

On February fifth Clark's land force was ready to march. An enthusiastic multitude, including all the men, women, and children of Kaskaskia, assembled to cheer the enterprise. Father Gibault pronounced a blessing upon the expedition and administered absolution. Amid the excited cheers of the crowd, with banners waving and drums beating, the expedition started across the drowned and frozen prairies of Illinois on a march of some two hundred miles. The force numbered about one hundred and thirty men — probably about seventy of Clark's old pioneer company and sixty Creoles.

The little band was well armed and fairly well provisioned for the beginning of such a journey. With confident hopes of success in the enterprise, they started out in the best of spirits. Sustained by faith in their gallant leader, they did not think of failure. It was as hopeful a band as the one that had taken Kaskaskia, but it was facing a much more difficult march and a far more dangerous enemy.

CHAPTER TEN

CROSSING ILLINOIS

THE only gala feature about that march to Vincennes was the start. It was a grim and frigid undertaking. What Hamilton had not even dared to contemplate, Clark was doing. Moving an army into hostile regions in the dead of winter is a serious prospect under any circumstances. To attempt such an exploit in a western wilderness during the Revolutionary War would seem the height of rashness and folly. While Clark and his men were facing the deadly exposure of a forced march of about two hundred miles through a wet and frozen wilderness, the armies of the East were encamped in the comparative safety of their winter quarters.

The rigors of an Illinois and Indiana February are well known. The February of 1779 was, if anything, more severe than usual. It was very wet — raining or snowing much of the time. That march of George Rogers Clark and his little band across Illinois from February 5 to February 23, 1779, is almost without parallel in military annals. Daily it became worse as they proceeded. Day by day they went constantly forward through drowned prairies, icy swamps, and swollen streams.

When they started, Clark rode a beautiful stallion, which had been brought from Mexico — the finest war charger that could be found. All his officers were well mounted. They had not proceeded far before they had to use the horses as pack animals;

and before they reached the Wabash, it was necessary to abandon the horses altogether. Frequently they had to stop, chop down trees, and make canoes and pirogues, with which to cross strips of water. At times on the overflowed banks of turbulent streams they had to erect scaffolds, on which to keep their supplies safe until all could be ferried over.

Clark kept up the spirit of his men by his own energy and courage. When the very worst stages of the march were reached, he and his officers set the men an example by running through the mud and shouting encouragement. Each day a company of men were sent out hunting, and upon their return in the evening a mighty camp fire was built. The whole band gathered around the fire and ate the game, while the hunting party provided the entertainment for the evening. Men and officers alike joined in the rude games of the frontier, such as wrestling and jumping. In these sports, Clark's athletic prowess made him a popular champion. Each company took its turn at hunting and entertaining.

As the band penetrated farther into the wilderness and nearer the Wabash, the flooded condition of the country made it impossible to procure game. They had brought limited supplies with them because of the difficulties of transportation, and they now began to suffer from want of food. Most of the supplies were on the *Willing*. They came to the banks of the Little Wabash on February thirteenth, and here they saw a vast sheet of water spread out before them. The two branches of the Little Wabash, the Em-



Colonel Clark assisting his men for the march from Kaskaskia, across Vincennes, from "Vincennes," one of the *Chronicles of America* Photo-plays. Copyright, By permission of Yale University Press.

barras, and the Wabash were all overflowing their banks and flooding the surrounding country to such an extent that it was difficult to determine where the main channels of any of these rivers were.

Clark ordered a large pirogue built and sent a party to explore the drowned lands on the opposite side of the Little Wabash. Before the men left, Clark instructed them privately that, no matter what they found, they were to bring back a favorable report. The party found about half an acre of land and marked a trail from that point back to camp by chipping the trees that stood in the water. They made an encouraging report to the men about their chances of reaching land on the opposite side of the river.

They proceeded on foot through the water and that evening they camped on a spot of high ground. In spite of the difficulties they had come through, and the still greater obstacles they had to face, the whole company seemed jubilant. In vivid imagination they considered themselves already dividing the spoils of Vincennes. Before bedtime, as Clark remarked, they were far advanced on their imaginary route to Detroit! He said they "really began to think themselves superior to other men, and that neither the rivers nor the season could stop their progress."

This was probably their last restful night on the march to Vincennes, for from that point the hardships became much more terrible and their means of advancement less favorable. From February sixteenth they were without regular provisions. On the

eighteenth, at break of day, they could hear Governor Hamilton's morning gun at the fort, less than ten miles away. Still they pressed on with rafts and canoes, wading and swimming in icy water practically all the time. Clark's lively drummer boy amused the company at times by floating on his drum. Rain was falling "nearly one third of the time."

During the last three days of the march, February 21 to 23, many of the men were so weak from hunger and fatigue that they had to be carried in canoes. At one particularly difficult passage, Clark left his men and went ahead to explore. He found the water up to his neck. It seemed that the wisest plan was to have the men taken across in canoes, but that would require a great deal of time and Clark felt that it was imperative to avoid every possible delay. When he returned to his company, he saw that the seriousness of his face was depressing the men. He could not let them become more discouraged. Whispering to those near him to follow his example, he "put some water in his hand, poured on powder, blackened his face, gave the warwhoop and marched into the water without saying a word." Some of the others blackened their faces and followed him. A stalwart sergeant in the company mounted the little drummer boy on his shoulders. The march was sounded and a song started. The sergeant with his load started after Clark, and the men, laughing and singing, followed as best they could. For the encouragement of stragglers in the rear, Clark ordered



A stalwart sergeant in the company mounted the little drummer boy on his shoulders. The march was sounded and a song started. Mural painting by Arthur Thomas in the Seelbach Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky. Courtesy of Mr. William Seelbach.

the men in front to cry "Land! Land!" even before land was in sight. Thus he got his band through the water to a camping place.

On the morning of the last terrible day, ice was freezing around them. They had been almost entirely without food for four days, and before them there was still a broad sheet of icy water, of which they did not know the depth. The men were exhausted, freezing, and starving. They had endured almost incredible hardship for eighteen days. Some of the Creole volunteers spoke rather grumblingly of returning to Kaskaskia. There was no disposition to mutiny, but it simply seemed impossible that they could go forward. They had no food, so in place of breakfast, Clark addressed his men in a

spirited speech. He appealed to them in the name of liberty to make one more effort. He assured them that before night they would find rest and warmth.

The men gave a faint cheer in response. Drawing his sword, Clark plunged into the icy water up to his shoulders, pushing aside the floating ice to break a passage. He turned and directed Major Bowman to fall in the rear with twenty-five picked men, and gave them orders to shoot anyone who "refused to march." He kept fifteen or twenty of the strongest men nearest him. The canoes were plied back and forth to gather up the fainting and falling men. Clark said later that he felt himself sensibly failing as the water became deeper and deeper.

When they neared the steep and wooded shores, only the tallest and strongest of the men, such as Clark himself, were able to clamber up the bank. Many were already lying on logs or in canoes, and others fell on the shore, partly in and partly out of the water. Some clung to branches of overhanging trees. That was all they could do.

There were no weak men in that party. Indeed, there were some exceptionally strong ones. These strong ones got ashore, pulled the others up the bank, and built fires. The fires, however, did not help the very exhausted men, who were benumbed through and through. So Clark himself, with others of the stronger and more able-bodied ones, began to exercise the benumbed men, working their muscles until life and warmth were restored from within.

Just at this point, as if sent by Providence, a

canoe of Indian squaws carrying a quarter of a buffalo with some tallow and corn in kettles was captured by the scouts. From the meat a nourishing broth was made and served out little by little to the famished men. This food, together with the rest and the warmth, gradually refreshed and restored them.

Thus revived, they crossed a narrow lake in the canoes, and after marching some distance, reached a copse of timber called Warriors Island, from which they had a full view of the fort and the town of Vincennes, about two miles distant. All the men feasted their eyes on this welcome sight, which had been the object of their arduous endeavor for the last eighteen days. Hardships and suffering were forgotten when they saw the fort before them.

They made prisoners of some Creoles who were out hunting and from them procured information concerning the state of affairs in the town and the fort.

Colonel Clark now sent men down the river to find the *Willing*. Although the crew of this boat numbered only forty men, they would have been a great help. Furthermore, the main supply of ammunition was on the *Willing*. But the boat had been delayed by the flooded condition of the Wabash, and it was nowhere to be seen. Clark knew that it would be fatal to wait for this reinforcement. As it turned out, the *Willing* arrived two days after the fighting was over.

From the captured Creoles they learned that a body of two hundred Indians had arrived at Vin-

cennes the night before, and Clark knew that others might come at any moment. To attack the town with his small force seemed a foolhardy thing to do, but he had faith in his men. They would fight their hardest, for in their present condition they could not retreat over the way they had come; and they feared torture by the Indians so much that they would not surrender.

Clark was very uncertain as to the attitude of the Creoles at Vincennes. Did they now prefer British control, or would they remember their former friendliness with the Americans? Their oath of allegiance to America had been voluntary, whereas they had been practically forced to swear allegiance to Great Britain. So he thought that they could not have a very cordial feeling toward the British. The prisoners he had taken gave him some assurance that the Creoles were not greatly attached to Hamilton and his army.

In accord with his usual direct method, Colonel Clark despatched the following message in writing to the people of Vincennes:

To the Inhabitants of Post Vincennes

GENTLEMEN: Being now within two miles of your village, with my army, determined to take your fort this night, and not being willing to surprise you, I take this method to request such of you as are true citizens, and willing to enjoy the liberty I bring you, to remain still in your houses — and those, if any there be, that are friends to the king, will instantly repair to the fort, and join the hair-buyer general, and fight like men. And if any such

as do not go to the fort shall be discovered afterward, they may depend on severe punishment. On the contrary, those who are true friends to liberty may depend on being well treated; and I once more request them to keep out of the streets. For everyone I find in arms on my arrival, I shall treat as an enemy.

G. R. CLARK

Meanwhile the men had looked to their arms and had put their rifles in perfect order. They were ready for an attack, although their supply of ammunition was very limited.

Colonel Clark now put into effect a clever idea for impressing the Creoles with the size of his army. Just before sunset he had his men march and counter-march over a rise in the ground in sight of the town — but not in sight of the fort. They carried their colors mounted on tall poles, so that they would make the excited Creoles two miles away think that a great number of Americans were upon them. In this way Clark hoped to frighten them into joining their forces with his. He kept up this maneuver until dark. Then, guided by some of the Creole hunters whom he had captured, he moved upon the town with his entire force. The march was ended. The die was cast.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE TAKING OF VINCENNES

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK took possession of the town of Vincennes with the main body of his troops on the night of February twenty-third. Fort Sackville, located on the banks of the Wabash, was almost within the little village. Candles were being lighted in the fort just about the time of Clark's arrival. In the darkness a small detachment of Americans under a lieutenant began the attack. The garrison was taken completely by surprise, as the Creoles had not informed them of the approach of the Americans. Hamilton evidently had no thought of an attack in midwinter. He trusted to his scouting parties and to his well-trained garrison in the fort. On that very day he had completed all repairs of the fort. It was in a thorough state of defense.

There is a tradition, reported as coming from Captain Helm, who was then a prisoner in the fort, that Hamilton and his officers were enjoying a game of cards and some hot whiskey toddy when the attack began. Captain Helm was with them. He had made himself popular with Hamilton and the other officers by his good nature and his share in the amusements. When the firing began, Hamilton thought it was only some drunken Indians returning from a hunting trip, as they often saluted the fort in the darkness by firing their guns. At the first volley, bullets struck the chimney of the officers' quarters, bringing down some dirt into the vessel

containing the toddy. Helm remarked, "Gentlemen, that is Clark's soldiers, and they will take your fort, but they ought not to have spoiled this apple toddy."

Presently the bullets began coming through the loopholes. A sergeant was killed and several soldiers were wounded. The British knew then that it was a real attack. The drums were sounded, a fusillade began from the fort, and a terrific battle of bullets was on. The British fired their cannon, but in the darkness they could do no damage except to buildings near by. Major Bowman in his diary says: "The cannon played smartly; not one of our men wounded, the men in the fort badly wounded. Fine sport for the sons of liberty!"

The people of Vincennes began to show friendliness, and Clark permitted some of them to join in the firing. They dug up ammunition which they had hidden from the British and gave Clark a plentiful supply, which was most welcome.

The Piankeshaw chief, Tobacco's Son, offered to join the Americans with a hundred warriors. Clark was a little suspicious of him, but he could not afford to show it. He thanked the chief for his friendly disposition, but said that he feared confusion of forces in the darkness, as there were many Indians in the vicinity who were not friendly. Clark said, however, that he hoped to be favored with the chief's counsel and company. Throughout the battle he kept the warrior near him so that he could prevent treachery if any were intended. It was no doubt

due largely to the influence of this friendly chief that hostile Indians, who were in the vicinity, remained outside the town and took no part in the conflict.

During the night Clark had his entire force surround the fort. Temporary entrenchments were thrown up and the men took positions behind such protection as they could find — corners of houses, palings, ditches, logs, and the banks of the river. Then in the early morning of February twenty-fourth, when the sun rose, the sharpshooters rained a deadly hail upon the fort from every angle. Their positions covered every embrasure and loophole of the fort at distances of from sixty to one hundred yards.

At this point let us take note of just what was happening. Here was a strong wilderness fort, in a perfect state of repair, commanded by an able British general, garrisoned by a picked band of British soldiers armed with muskets and cannon. Hamilton had only about ninety men in the fort at this time, but ninety trained men were considered enough for the defense of such a fort, as wilderness warfare was then waged.

On the outside of this fortress on the Wabash there was a ragged band of woodsmen, armed only with flintlock rifles. They had endured extreme hardships in their wintry march to reach this place. They had no protection, except such temporary breastworks as they could find, and they had no training in soldiery other than what they had learned in the warfare of the wilderness. But there was one

thing they could do with complete efficiency — they could fire their long rifles with deadly accuracy. At a hundred yards, on instant sight, they could hit the mark within a hair's breadth.

The British soldiers undertook to clear the surrounding space with their cannon. In order to operate the cannon, they had to open the embrasures, and in doing so, it was necessary to expose an arm, hand, shoulder, or possibly the side of a head. Whenever there was any exposure, however small, it was immediately swept by a storm of bullets from the unerring riflemen. The Americans fired with such deadly accuracy and killed and wounded so many men that it became necessary to abandon the cannon and close the embrasures.

This action removed the principal danger to the attackers. If the cannon could have been successfully operated, the garrison would have speedily demolished the trifling defenses of the frontiersmen and driven them beyond rifle range of the fort. The firing of small arms from the fort was continued. Whenever a loophole was darkened by a man's face, a bullet passed through, shooting out the very eyes of the British soldier. So fatal was the rifle onslaught of the keen-eyed frontiersmen, that the British soldiers simply had to keep away from the loopholes. After a hot exchange of shots for some time, the fire from the fort practically ceased.

Thus, on the banks of the Wabash on that February morning of 1779, was enacted a miracle of warfare. A band of ragged frontier riflemen, by sheer gal-

lantry and peerless marksmanship, actually silenced a British garrison.

About nine o'clock in the morning, when Clark thought sufficient impression had been made by the riflemen, he sent the following message to Governor Hamilton :

SIR, In order to save yourself from the impending storm that now threatens you, I order you immediately to surrender yourself with all your garrison, stores, etc., etc. For, if I am obliged to storm, you may depend on such treatment as is justly due to a murderer. Beware of destroying stores of any kind, or any papers or letters that are in your possession, or hurting one house in town; for, by heavens! if you do, there shall be no mercy shown you.

G. R. CLARK

When Hamilton received this defiance, he answered in a dignified way that he and his garrison "were not disposed to be awed into any action unworthy of British subjects." The riflemen were raging to storm the fort, but Clark held them back, and presently Hamilton sent him a proposal for a truce of three days and a conference. Clark refused the truce, but agreed to the conference. He immediately met Hamilton in front of the little church about eighty yards from the fort. During this conference the women of Vincennes treated Clark's hungry soldiers to a breakfast, which was the first regular meal they had taken for eight days.

Hamilton brought with him his prisoner, Captain Helm, and his officer next in command, Major Hay, who had been noted for many years as one of

Colonel Clark's Compliments to Mr. —
Hamilton and begs leave to inform
him that Col. Clark will not agree
to any other Terms than that of Mr
Hamilton's Surrendering himself and
Garrison, Prisoners at Discretion. —

If Mr. Hamilton is Desirous of
a Conference with Col. Clark he will —
meet him at the Church with Capt^m
Helms —

Feby 24th 1779 — Clarke

Colonel Clark's note replying to Hamilton's request for a truce and a conference. From a manuscript in the Draper Collection, now in possession of the Wisconsin State Historical Library.

the leading Indian agents of Detroit. Clark was attended only by his faithful major, Joseph Bowman. The conference was sharp and decisive. Clark repeated his demand for an immediate surrender as "prisoners at discretion." He really put into language the idea afterwards made immortal by General Grant — "immediate and unconditional surrender."

Hamilton insisted that such terms were unreasonable and impossible. He said that it was unheard of that soldiers in a fort should be required to surrender themselves prisoners at discretion, subject to the will of their captors, without any honors of war. Captain Helm, who had received good treatment from Hamilton and evidently entertained a kindly feeling toward the British officer, suggested that Clark moderate his demands. But Clark had determined that there was to be no compromise. He silenced Helm, telling him that he was a prisoner and it was doubtful whether he could with propriety speak on the subject. Hamilton then stated that Captain Helm was from that moment free and might do as he liked. But Clark refused to receive Helm on such terms and told him he must return to the garrison and await his fate.

Clark then took his leave with the statement that in a few minutes the drums would sound and the attack would begin. He had gone but a few steps when Hamilton called to him in a polite manner and asked if he would object to giving his real reasons for refusing to accept the surrender of the garrison on any other terms than the harsh ones he had offered. Clark replied that he had no objection to giving his reasons. He said he knew that the greater part of the principal "Indian partisans" of Detroit were there in the fort and that he wanted an excuse to put them to death or otherwise treat them as he thought proper. The cries of the wives and children of murdered pioneers now required the blood of these

Indian partisans and he did not choose to disobey the commands of authority which he looked upon as next to divine. He said he would rather lose fifty men than not to empower himself to execute this piece of business, and that if Hamilton chose to risk the massacre of his garrison for the sake of the partisans it was his own pleasure. Clark added, in concluding his statement, that he might perhaps take it into his head to send for some of those widows from Kentucky to see justice executed.

At this point Major Hay spoke up in a very haughty manner: "Pray, sir, who is it that you call Indian partisans?" Clark replied, "Sir, I take Major Hay to be one of the principal," whereupon the haughty Englishman looked like a culprit about to be hanged — pale and trembling, scarcely able to stand.

While this conference was in session, there occurred a startling event which some may look upon with regret. Nevertheless, it illustrates the stern policy which Clark used successfully in his campaigns. During this lull in the firing, an Indian party, which Hamilton had sent to the Kentucky settlements, returned with scalps. Not knowing that the Americans were in Vincennes, they attempted to get into the fort and were captured by Clark's men, after some of the Indians had been killed in the running fight which took place before the capture.

What happened when those stern frontiersmen, especially the Kentuckians, got their hands upon



The surrender of Vincennes. As his men marched out of Fort Sackville to lay down their arms, Hamilton saluted Clark. From "Vincennes," one of the Chronicles of America Photoplays. Copyright. By permission of Yale University Press.

those savages who were in the pay of the British, and from whose belts dangled bloody scalps of women and children, is not surprising. Clark's men brought these Indians — four of them, who had the scalps — directly in front of the gate of the fort, tomahawked them in the face of the garrison, and threw their bodies into the Wabash River. It was the frontiersman's answer to the policy which Hamilton had been following throughout that region.

Clark ordered this punishment, or at least he permitted and approved it. It had just the effect upon the Indians which he had expected. They considered it as nothing less than absolute justice. Those who were to be executed bared their heads willingly to the tomahawk and sang their death songs in proud and defiant fashion. It caused the Indians generally to feel contempt for the British, who were not able to defend their allies and who permitted them to be taken and executed within the very sight of a British stronghold. It struck terror to the hearts of the British soldiers. General Hamilton surrendered outright. This was the afternoon of February twenty-fourth.

Clark thought it best not to take possession of the fort that evening, but he completed all the arrangements. Early in the morning of February 25, 1779, he lined up his little band of hardy frontiersmen before the gate of Fort Sackville and received the unconditional surrender of Governor Hamilton with his force of Royal Redcoats from the King's Own

Regiment. In their brilliant uniforms, they marched out between the lines of stalwart riflemen and became their prisoners.

The British flag was pulled down from Fort Sackville and the American flag was raised. Clark immediately changed the name to Fort Patrick Henry. This was the beginning of American dominion in this region of the Old Northwest.

On the day after the capture of Vincennes, Clark sent a force of men under Captain Helm up the Wabash to meet a small fleet which he learned was coming from Detroit. It brought a rich supply of goods that were being carried to the mouth of the Tennessee, in preparation for Hamilton's Indian Council. The fleet was promptly captured on the Wabash some distance below Ouiatanon. The men in charge were made prisoners and the entire cargo, valued at fifty thousand dollars, was brought to Vincennes. Instead of supplying the Indians with presents and bribes from the British, those goods were used for the benefit of Clark's needy soldiers.

The fall of Vincennes marked the end of British domination in the West. Judged by all practical standards, this achievement was in the nature of a miracle. But contemplated in the light of history, the explanation of how and why it happened is clear and definite. Hamilton, who was naturally a somewhat prejudiced, though well-informed judge, attributed the capture of the fort to luck or the favor of fortune. It has been noted that Hamilton was a soldier, a diplomat, and a statesman of high caliber.

It seems that he was also a scholar. In his journal, where he set down day by day important events and comments, he wrote on the afternoon of February 25, 1779, the following significant statement :

Colonel Clark's having succeeded under such circumstances illustrates the following remark made by some author whose name I do not recollect : "A sanguine temper foresees few difficulties and sometimes owes success to a fortunate rashness which is esteemed by foresighted people as taking Fortune in the willing mood. 'Tis true Fortune favors the bold, but the rash have no pretensions to her favor."

Colonel Clark's views were expressed somewhat differently. Just following his first success in his campaign at Kaskaskia, he wrote his father : "Fortune in every respect as yet has hovered round me as if determined to direct me. You may judge, sir, what impressions it must have on a grateful breast whose greatest glory is to adore the Supreme Director of all things."

In his later memoirs he makes this "confession" concerning his state of mind during the greatest discouragements and perils of his desperate undertaking. "I cannot account for it, but I still had inward assurance of success and never could, weighing every circumstance, doubt it, but I had some secret check."

It was plainly a case of the right man for a great mission. Clark felt that he was inspired as truly as any great leader of either sacred or secular history. He did nothing rashly or in a haphazard fashion.



George Rogers Clark receives General Hamilton's submission at Fort Sackville. From the painting by Frederick C. Yohn. Courtesy of *The Youth's Companion*.

All of his enterprises were thoughtfully contemplated and carefully planned before any action was taken. There was a clear strain of positive and constructive thinking that ran through his entire conduct, affecting even his bearing, his expression of countenance, and his very language.

The conquest of the Old Northwest, which the heroic capture of Vincennes actually accomplished,

was distinctively the deed of George Rogers Clark. Not often in history has any great event depended so entirely upon the soul, the mind, and the arm of one man. It should be remembered that it was he who first conceived this glorious enterprise. His clear and powerful mind planned and organized it in every detail; and his was the valiant arm that executed it. Now at the very height of his fame, he was still in the flush of youth — twenty-six years of age, a dashing young Virginian, a magnificent American.

George Rogers Clark should be forever remembered just as he was then. A picture of this ideal figure of a military hero is preserved for us in the language of Governor Reynolds of Illinois: "Colonel Clark was nature's favorite, in his person as well as his mind. He was large and athletic, capable of enduring much; yet formed with such noble symmetry and manly beauty that he combined much grace and elegance, together with great firmness of character. He was grave and dignified in his deportment; agreeable and affable with his soldiers, when relaxed from duty; but in a crisis — when the fate of his campaign was at stake, or the lives of his brave warriors were in danger — his deportment became stern and severe. His appearance in these perils indicated, without language, to his men that every soldier must do his duty."

CHAPTER TWELVE

HISTORIC RESULTS

IF the brilliant victory of George Rogers Clark at Vincennes had ended only in victory, without further consequences, it would still have been remembered as a feat of supreme daring. But it became much more important because of the benefits to the United States which grew out of it. History can hardly offer a parallel in which heroic endeavor and historic consequences are united in such high degree.

The Northwest Territory, it is generally agreed, was given us as the result of this victory. It may be admitted, of course, that our possession of the Old Northwest was finally the result of diplomacy rather than war. There was a diplomatic battle, at the Peace Conference in Paris in 1783, before this territory was yielded to us.

As a result of Clark's victories at Kaskaskia and Vincennes, we had possession of the greater part of all this region when the Revolutionary War ended. Great Britain still held Detroit, but her actual influence and power were limited to a small area about the Great Lakes. Clark's victory gave us the argument of possession of all the southern part of the Old Northwest at the critical time. That "possession is nine points of the law" is a well-known rule for any walk in life. Possession constitutes the "finest etiquette of diplomacy" in national disputes over

ownership and retention of lands. We had possession when our commissioners, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay, met the skilled diplomats of Europe at the conference in Paris in 1783. There were foreign influences, outside of Great Britain, that favored her retention of this western domain in preference to having it added to the rising strength of the new nation.

Even Benjamin Franklin seemed to waver over what appeared to be good diplomatic policy, to concede to Great Britain her claim to the Northwest. John Adams was for a time almost neutral on that point; but John Jay stood positively and firmly for the retention of this vast region until success crowned his efforts.

The instructions of Congress to John Jay in October, 1780, laid stress upon our right to this territory by "the conquests of British posts within it," since by the success of our arms we had "obtained possession of all the important posts and settlements on the Illinois and Wabash, rescued the inhabitants from British domination, and established civil government in its proper form over them."

Had it not been for the victory of Clark and the immigration of pioneers who took possession of the land, we have little reason to believe that this diplomatic victory at Paris would have been possible. The great Middle West might have remained British, along with Canada, and might never have fallen into our possession again — certainly not without another war.

The immediate result of the victory at Vincennes was that it encouraged immigration and settlement. The overthrow of Indian control and the surrender of the British opened up this great region of the West, particularly the valley of the Ohio. The capture of Vincennes was closely followed, in 1779 and 1780, by a flood of immigration down the Ohio River and along the Tennessee and up through Cumberland Gap. During the year 1780 some twenty thousand settlers came to Kentucky from the East, and probably twenty thousand more to the regions of the Holston in Tennessee. Among those who came to Kentucky from Virginia in 1780 was Abraham Lincoln, the grandfather of Honest Abe.

The increase and spread of settlements on both sides of the Ohio River continued rapidly from this time forth. It was this settlement of the lands by Americans that made our possession of the territory permanent and secure. And it was Clark's victory at Vincennes that made it comparatively safe for families to make their homes in this wilderness.

It seems almost unnecessary to comment upon the importance of winning this Northwest Territory at the beginning of our life as a nation. What would the United States be without it? Of all our vast domain, there is no part of it more essentially American than this. It came to us by heroic American conquest. To win this section of our country, Americans conquered Great Britain, the Indians, and a stubborn wilderness. Out of it were formed the great states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin,

and a part of Minnesota. It is a rich and beautiful country, which has been fittingly termed the granary of the world. It was for this territory that Congress passed the Ordinance of 1787, a charter of constitutional freedom. The winning of the Northwest Territory made our western boundary the Mississippi, instead of the Alleghenies, and it brought under our dominion a new empire almost as vast as the entire thirteen original colonies.

The cession of Virginia's claims to this great territory in 1784, making it a part of the national domain, furnished a common bond of interest and ownership that was a powerful factor in holding the jarring states together during the dark period of the Confederation. This territory became a stronghold of freedom and union. It made possible and expedient the Louisiana Purchase and our further extensions westward, whereby the claim of colonial days was realized — "from sea to sea." Clark's achievement was the foundation stone for all of this vast consequence.

The brilliant victory, moreover, had an immediate effect on our success in winning the Revolutionary War.

The British plan for a general and systematic Indian raid upon our inner frontiers in 1779 has already been explained. Clark's capture of Hamilton at Vincennes broke this up completely. Hamilton did not hold his Indian council at the mouth of the Tennessee. In fact, his career in the Revolution ended at Vincennes, on the banks of the Wabash,



Statue of George Rogers Clark in Monument Circle at Indianapolis, Indiana. The sculptor was Rudolph Swartz. The inscription reads: "General George Rogers Clark. Conqueror of the Country Northwest of the River Ohio from the British, 1778-9."

February 25, 1779. He was sent to Virginia in irons. During most of the remaining period of the war, his quarters were a narrow dungeon in the old brick jail at Williamsburg, which still stands. That mighty Indian campaign never materialized.

It is true that Indian outrages were committed in various parts of the West after Clark's conquest of Vincennes, but they were never conducted on such a basis as to threaten seriously the fortunes of war in the East. Though the settlements of Kentucky were harassed by the Indians, they continued to grow in strength and numbers.

Had it not been for Clark's successes at Kaskaskia and Vincennes, the Indian campaign would have been launched in the spring and summer of 1779 and quite probably would have crushed Kentucky and devastated the Allegheny frontiers. That would have made it impossible for Washington to keep an important portion of his army in the field. But for Clark's achievement, the invaluable sharpshooters from the frontiers would no doubt have been back on the border defending their homes.

We should remember also that Washington had to depend largely on the border for the food supplies of his soldiers. He could not rely upon wagon trains from the East, but counted upon the herds of live stock, driven by frontiersmen from the border, and upon pack horses which brought meat and grain from the frontiers. As a result of Clark's victories, Washington continued to receive food supplies from the border and powder by way of the Mississippi.

The protection of the frontiers — in the manner in which Clark protected them by his bold offensive into the heart of the West — was as important to the cause of the Revolution as the victories that Washington won on the eastern side of the Alleghenies. It is therefore clear that Clark's heroic capture of Vincennes — his conquest of the Old Northwest — was a decisive factor in bringing the Revolutionary War to a speedy and successful ending.

Of all that splendid group of brilliant generals under Washington, whose names shed glory on the American Revolution, there is none brighter than George Rogers Clark. In Revolutionary annals he may be ranked second only to him who was "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE TERRIBLE SHAWNEES

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK took the lead again in a campaign against the Indians which contributed largely to the safety of the pioneer settlements. This action took place in a rich section of what is now the state of Ohio. During the Revolution this was the home of the terrible Shawnees. That great nation was ever a roving people. About the middle of the eighteenth century they moved northward from the region of Florida and made their home for a time in Pennsylvania; from there they moved farther westward. During the period of the French and Indian War and the Revolution, their main headquarters were in the vicinity of the Scioto River and the Mad River. Their principal villages were Chillicothe on the Scioto and Piqua on the Mad.

True to the fierce character which they had previously shown in Lord Dunmore's War, the Shawnees made many savage raids during the Revolution. They were known as the most warlike and restless of all the Indian tribes — the first in the battle, the last at the treaty. It was against this tribe that Colonel Clark directed the expedition which was perhaps his principal military achievement after his victory at Vincennes.

Although the British plans for a general Indian onslaught against the Allegheny border were abandoned, the attacks of Indians upon the Kentucky settlements were perhaps fiercer than ever because

of the increased number of settlers that were pouring into these regions. Foremost among these raiders were the terrible Shawnees. The frontiersmen, in desperation, struck at these Indians in their stronghold. In May, 1779, a force of about one hundred and sixty Kentuckians, commanded by Colonel John Bowman, attacked the Shawnee town of Chillicothe in central Ohio. Although the company included some of the most brilliant fighters of the frontier, such as Benjamin Logan and James Harrod, the attempt was not a success. The doughty warriors in their well-fortified cabins of Chillicothe beat off the fighting Kentuckians and compelled them to retreat. Nevertheless, the settlers inflicted severe punishment upon the Shawnee braves, and their attack delayed some threatened Indian raids.

In the spring of 1780 a force of about six hundred Indians and a few Canadians under Colonel Henry Bird, a British officer, came from Detroit southward. They brought several cannon and for a short time harassed the Kentucky settlements. They captured two small stockades, Ruddle's and Martin's Stations, killed and scalped many of the settlers, and carried a large number of prisoners and considerable plunder back to Detroit.

George Rogers Clark at this time was building Fort Jefferson on the Mississippi River, five miles below the mouth of the Ohio. When he heard of these raids on the Kentucky settlements, he determined to inflict stern punishment on the Indians.

He decided that it was time to "give the Shawnees a drubbing." In the latter part of May he left Fort Jefferson and made his way through the wilderness to Harrodsburg. There is an interesting tradition that he came accompanied by only two men. According to the story, he and his companions disguised themselves as Indians and made the entire journey on foot, through a wilderness in which there were many roving bands of hostile Indians. They crossed the flooded Tennessee on a raft fastened together with grape vines, at a time when Indians were watching both sides of the river.

When Clark arrived at Harrodsburg, he found the chief interest of the settlement was in the Land Court, as a result of the activities of greedy land speculators, who were even then promoting their schemes for making gains out of the Kentucky lands. Clark immediately closed the Land Court. He also issued an order to all able-bodied fighting men of Kentucky to muster at a general meeting at the mouth of the Licking River, for the purpose of invading the Shawnee country. Many settlers were preparing to leave Kentucky because of the panic over the recent Indian raids. Clark put a stop to this by sending a force of men to Crab Orchard at the mouth of the Wilderness Road, which was the southern inlet (and outlet) of Kentucky, with orders to prevent any men from leaving the country and to disarm those who persisted in doing so. He left a small body of men to guard the fort at Harrodsburg and Fort Nelson at Louisville.

Almost a thousand men assembled at the mouth of the Licking. Nearly all the fighting men of Kentucky were there. Among them were Clark's old companions, Si Kenton and James Harrod. They came quickly at the call of their trusted commander, some in rafts and canoes, some on foot, and some on horseback. The women and boys were left to guard the settlements.

On August second Clark started up the Ohio with an army numbering a little less than one thousand. The men were well armed and each one had two pounds of meal and some jerked meat. They expected to make a rapid advance and a quick return. They carried one three-pounder cannon on a pack horse to use against the Indian stockades.

After going up the Ohio for a short distance, they marched overland about sixty miles to Chillicothe. They found that the Indians had deserted the town upon learning of their approach. After burning the houses and destroying the corn in the fields about Chillicothe, they pushed on to Piqua, which was the most important village of the Shawnees. It was located a few miles west of the present site of Springfield, Ohio. The entire march was conducted with military precision and order. The force was divided into four companies. Each night they made their camp in the form of a hollow square, with the horses and baggage on the inside. They were in hostile territory all the time and they took no chances of a surprise.

The village of Piqua was an Indian stronghold consisting of well-built log houses and a strong blockhouse in the middle. There were strips of corn land on the stream, and the town was surrounded by thick woods along the river and by small prairies farther back.

The feelings with which Simon Kenton, the intrepid scout, accompanied and guided this expedition may be imagined. This was the actual vicinity where, not many months before, he had been several times subjected to the dreadful gantlet as a prisoner of the Indians. He had narrowly escaped death by torture, mainly through the friendly intervention of Chief Logan and of Simon Girty, his former scout companion in Lord Dunmore's War. Girty had joined the Indians and, with one and possibly both of his brothers, James and George, was at this time leading the Shawnees and other warlike tribes in their raids against the Kentucky settlements. It is certain that two Girtys were in Piqua at the time of this battle, and it has been generally assumed that Simon was one of them.

It was on the morning of August 8, 1780, that Colonel Clark approached this formidable Indian village with his army. The march had been made through heavy rains, and before the attack was started it was necessary to make sure that the rifles were in perfect order. Clark therefore ordered his men to discharge their guns in squads. After the men of each squad fired, they reloaded before the next squad fired.

Taking direct charge of two of the divisions, Clark crossed the river below the town and attacked from the front. He trained his one cannon on the log fort and shattered it to pieces. He had ordered Benjamin Logan with the other two divisions to cross the river above the town and assault it from the rear. As Logan could not find a ford, he was delayed in crossing the stream, so that it was almost evening and the fighting was over before he reached the town.

Clark's advance met with vigorous resistance from the Indians under the leadership of the renegade Girty; but after the fort was demolished by the cannon, Girty deserted with a strong Mingo band. Although the Shawnees fought desperately for their homes, they were driven from cover to cover. The loss was not heavy, but several men were killed on each side. The battle lasted most of the day and resulted in complete victory for Clark and his Kentucky riflemen.

It is not known just how many Indians participated in this battle. All the warriors of the Shawnee nation were there, and they were aided by a powerful force of several hundred Mingo. Every house in the village was burned to the ground, and all the growing crops and other provisions were destroyed. The Shawnees were effectually routed, and their stronghold was demolished. The scattered braves had to cease war and go to hunting to save their people from starvation.

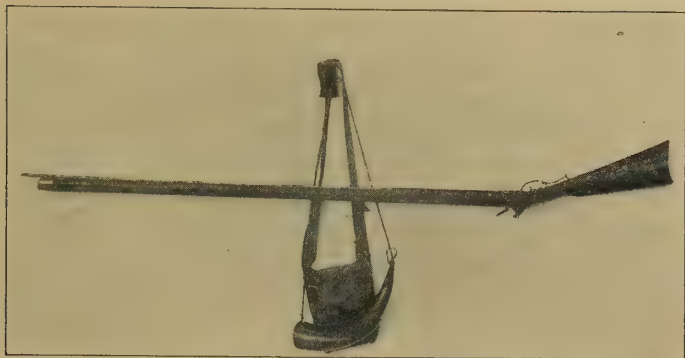
It may be noted that this battle was possibly Tecumseh's first experience in warfare. This Indian,



Monument on the battle ground of Piqua, near Springfield, Ohio. The sculptor was Charles Keck. "Here General George Rogers Clark with his Kentucky soldiers defeated and drove from this region the Shawnee Indians, August 8, 1780, thus aiding to make the Northwest Territory part of the United States. Erected by the Clark County Historical Society with the aid of the State of Ohio, 1924."

who a generation later became the most renowned warrior of all the Shawnees, was twelve years of age at the time of the battle at Piqua. Child though he was, he fought desperately, and in later years the story was often told of how he shed tears of anger and hatred at the sight of the burning village, which was his home and the place of his birth. This was doubtless the beginning of his terrible hatred of the whites, an antagonism which led to much bloodshed between the two races.

One of the tragic features of the battle was the death of young Joseph Rogers, a favorite cousin of Colonel Clark. He was the cousin whom Clark had induced to accompany him from Virginia to Kentucky in 1776. The youth had been taken prisoner by the Indians on Christmas Day, 1776, while he was in the party transporting powder from Maysville to Harrodsburg. The Shawnees had made him a member of one of their families, and for nearly four years he had lived with them. In this battle, painted and dressed as an Indian, he was compelled to take part on the side of the Shawnees, and he had entered the fight firing a rifle at Clark's advancing army. When the Indians were driven from their last retreat, he did not go with them, but ran towards Clark's army shouting, "I am a white man! I am a white man!" He was shot down as he ran. It is not known whether the fatal shot came from one of Clark's soldiers, who thought him an Indian, or from the Indians, who saw he was deserting them.



The flintlock rifle, bullet pouch, and powder horn of the Kentucky frontiersman.

Before he died he sent for Clark, who knelt in sorrow by his side. He told Clark to say to the soldiers that he had not hurt any of them in the fight, as he had purposely overshot them all the time. He died in his twenty-fifth year, just two years younger than his illustrious cousin.

After the victory at Piqua, Clark returned quickly to the Kentucky settlements. So vigorous had been the campaign that the men were absent from their homes only about a month. Most of the volunteers had been away just twenty-five days. This campaign was conducted with the speed typical of all Clark's important movements.

The battle at Piqua, besides being a victory over the Shawnees in their principal villages, warned the Indians against disturbing the Kentucky settlements. It showed the Indians what they might expect from Clark if they attempted further inroads on the

pioneers south of the Ohio. It gave the settlers assurance of their safety, so that they no longer wanted to leave the frontier. Consequently, the settlements grew rapidly in strength and numbers during the Revolutionary period.

This was really one of the most decisive victories ever won against red warriors, although the fatalities were not large on either side. Coming at a time when the Indians were becoming more troublesome and when the settlers were ready to abandon Kentucky, it had an importance far out of proportion to the number of warriors engaged and the number killed. The Indians already had great admiration for the prowess of George Rogers Clark, and after this, his last outstanding victory, they feared and respected him more than ever. He had humbled the terrible Shawnees.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INGRATITUDE AND GLOOM

It is the way of romance to leave the hero at the summit of his achievement, with the sunshine of fortune bright upon him, but such is not the way of history. It is one of the sad facts in history that the life of George Rogers Clark, of which the morning was so brilliant, had a dismal afternoon and evening. He reached the height of his career at the early age of twenty-six. During nearly all the remaining forty-one years of his life he experienced disappointment, suffering, and ingratitude.

The principal causes of this unhappiness may be briefly sketched. It seems almost ungracious to mention these sordid facts after relating the early and successful career of George Rogers Clark. But it is not enough that history should stimulate and inspire us. History can train us in thoughtful contemplation of the sober mysteries of life and the unaccountable caprices of fate. The later life of George Rogers Clark offers a subject for contemplation of the ingratitude of men and particularly the ingratitude of governments. The gloom which overcast his early prime and middle age, and the misfortunes which darkened his old age, may be attributed to three causes.

First: He was financially ruined and discredited. In order to outfit his expeditions, he had endorsed bonds in the name of Virginia, which were never reimbursed during his lifetime.

Second: He became the object of persecution by fraudulent land companies because he had thwarted their schemes in Kentucky.

Third: His health was undermined and he suffered intensely as a result of the hardship and exposure of his early campaigns.

It has already been explained that in preparing for his expedition from Kaskaskia to Vincennes, when his supplies were exhausted and his authority uncertain, he financed the enterprise by drawing bills of credit upon Virginia, which he had to endorse personally. He thought he was a wealthy man at that time; and indeed he was, or would have become wealthy, through the development of his rich land holdings in Kentucky. He felt that Virginia would surely honor these charges since he incurred them in her service. In his later movements after the taking of Vincennes, he became surety for like purposes on other bonds in the name of Virginia. Thus he became involved for very considerable amounts — all in the name of Virginia, whom he served.

Virginia did not honor these claims and they had to be made good out of Clark's own estate. These claims fell into the hands of unscrupulous men, who harassed the unfortunate Clark throughout the remainder of his life. All his property was taken, but even that did not suffice. He was never permitted to hold property in his own name because of these claimants.

During five brilliant years he had neither asked nor

received a dollar of his officer's pay. Then in his hour of need, when he finally demanded compensation and was given a grant of poor lands in extreme western Kentucky, even this poor pay was seized upon and sold to settle the debts of Virginia. He did not share in the division of his father's estate, for the reason that his portion would have been seized upon and sold to satisfy creditors. Thus he became bankrupt — impoverished and dependent in the empire he had won. Later in life, he said concerning the unwise financial risks he had incurred by endorsing the state's obligations: "But a country was at stake; and if it was imprudence, I suppose I should do the same, should I again have a similar field to pass through."

While we recognize that Clark was neglected by his native state, for whom he had done so much, it must be remembered that Virginia was in difficult circumstances. Virginia had done far more than her share in all phases of the Revolutionary War and especially in the winning of the West. After the treaty of 1783 she ceded to the United States her claim to the splendid Northwest Territory. By doing this, she thought she had relieved herself of the burden of debt which she had incurred in the winning of this land. She referred Clark's claims to the general government. They were bandied back and forth between the state and the national governments during a period of great confusion, in the midst of which the hero of the Old Northwest was allowed to go unrewarded.

Some of Clark's best friends shared a fate similar to his. Francis Vigo, who was a man of business genius and who had considerable wealth when Clark first knew him, became impoverished because of the discredited paper money he accepted and the bills of credit he indorsed in order to help supply Clark's expedition. He died in Vincennes in 1836 at the extreme age of eighty-nine years. The funeral expenses were not paid until forty years after his death, when the United States Congress finally made allowances covering all his losses for the American cause.

Oliver Pollock was not only impoverished but he was actually imprisoned for the debts he incurred by accepting bills of credit on behalf of the Continental Congress and the state of Virginia. Some of these debts were for advancement of supplies to Clark. This resourceful Irishman, however, did not give up until he finally got some reimbursement both from Virginia and from Congress. Through his business keenness, he succeeded in restoring his fortune.

Father Pierre Gibault suffered persecution because of his devotion to the American cause. He sacrificed all his personal possessions to aid Clark and to bring his parishioners to sympathize with the American cause. In his dependent old age he presented a pathetic memorial to the governor of the Northwest Territory, which he had helped to win, asking for a little garden patch of five acres of ground in Kaskaskia, on which to plant "his vine and fig tree" for

the comfort of his declining years. This petition was denied, and the aged priest withdrew to a small settlement across the Mississippi, where he died under Spanish dominion. Even the place of his burial is unmarked and unknown.

The account of Clark's troubles with land grafters involves a brief mention of what has been characterized as one of the "most audacious and powerfully supported frauds" ever attempted in our history. Two syndicates, known as the Vandalia and Indiana Companies, were organized in London, England, before the Revolution. They held a bogus title to western Virginia and eastern Kentucky under a pretended deed from the Iroquois Indians. The Iroquois had no more actual authority to give title to these lands than to lands in Afghanistan.

Basing their claim on this deed, these syndicates brought forward a gigantic scheme. Some of the most eminent officers of the British government became involved—members of Parliament, the King's Lord Chamberlain, a Prime Minister, the Lord High Chancellor of England, and the King's Superintendent of Indian Affairs in America north of the Ohio. They were all "stockholders" in this enterprise.

After the outbreak of the Revolution, these two land companies transferred their headquarters from London to Philadelphia, where they influenced the Continental Congress to such an extent that they almost disrupted the Confederation. After the war they sent to Kentucky a horde of special representa-

tives, whom Clark described as vastly worse than either the Indians or the British.

It was their purpose to set up an independent state, separate from Virginia and perhaps from the Union. They made overtures to Clark, suggesting that he become governor general. No doubt they would have made him dictator of an empire if he would have served their purposes, but, patriot that he was, he sturdily resisted their efforts and arrested some of the principal conspirators. For this reason they were hostile to him, and their persecution of him almost surpasses belief.

These syndicates had influence in the national Congress and in the legislature of Virginia. They were powerful in the new settlements of Kentucky. They did not hesitate to injure Clark with misrepresentation and abuse. They had much to do with the neglect which he suffered from Virginia and the nation. He was ruined financially, discredited officially, and all but smothered personally, by the indignities heaped upon him in the territory which he had conquered.

During all his later life George Rogers Clark suffered from the ill health which came as a direct result of his strenuous military campaigns. It is indeed strange that in the terrific fighting at the taking of Vincennes he did not lose a single man killed in battle. Two were slightly wounded. Shortly afterwards, when the glow of excitement had passed, many of his men grew ill and died. Many more of them — in fact nearly all — were physical wrecks.

There is a limit to what flesh and blood can endure ; and these men, in that march from Kaskaskia to Vincennes in midwinter, with insufficient food and without rest or shelter, had gone beyond all limits of endurance. Clark himself, invincible young giant that he was, although sustained by an unconquerable spirit while in the midst of those hardships, was visited with extreme penalties ever afterward. He suffered serious ill health and physical pain from rheumatism, neuralgia, neuritis, and finally paralysis.

It must not be inferred that Clark was never able to accomplish anything after the conquest of Vincennes. Notwithstanding all these complications, he rendered much valuable service to Virginia and Kentucky and the Union. His powerful influence with the Indians and his ability in Indian campaigns helped the western settlements during several dark and bloody years. He made a few journeys back to Virginia, where he presented his claims and accounts so definitely and accurately that, when they were finally checked up half a century later, they were found to be perfectly reliable and legal.

Near the end of 1780 Clark took a valorous part in defending Virginia from the invasion of the traitor, Benedict Arnold. He went east to raise troops for a proposed expedition against Detroit, but he found that all the men were needed at home to defend the state against the British under Arnold. With a band of untrained militia, he led the advance party which drew these British forces into an ambushade, and administered the only serious defeat

THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA to *George Rogers Clark* Gentleman, greeting:
 KNOW YOU that our Governour being duly certified of your Ability
 and good Character, hath constituted you the said *George Rogers Clark*
 Surveyor of the ~~Commonwealth~~ ^{an Act of the Legislature passed in the 21st Year of the Independence of the United States}
 with Authority to execute the said
 Office ~~of Surveyor~~ ^{of the said Commonwealth}, and to take for so doing the Fees allowed by
 Law: **SAVING AND RESERVING** to the President and Professors of
 the College of *William & Mary* one sixth part of the legal Fees which shall be
 received by you. IN TESTIMONY whereof these our Letters are made
 patent. WITNESS ~~our hands~~ ^{*Benjamin Harrison*}, Esquire, our said Governour at Richmond the *fifth*
 Day of *March* in the Year of our Lord One Thousand
 Seven Hundred and *21*

Benjamin Harrison

Surveyor's certificate issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia to George Rogers Clark in 1784. It constituted General Clark principal surveyor of lands granted to the soldiers and officers of the Revolution. From the original in the Draper Collection in the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

Arnold met with in Virginia. It was eminently fitting that the title of brigadier general was conferred upon him in January, 1781.

Perhaps Clark's greatest single disappointment was the impossibility of leading an expedition against Detroit, which had been his most cherished objective after the conquest of Vincennes. Although he made desperate efforts to organize such an expedition, it never materialized. This was not due to any fault on his part.

The capture of Detroit was greatly desired by General Washington, but the Continental Congress was unable to support the expedition. Washington encouraged Governor Jefferson to attempt it as a Virginia enterprise. On December 28, 1780, he wrote Colonel David Broadhead, commanding at Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh), directing all possible support of the expedition. This letter contained the following reference to Clark :

The inability of the continent to undertake the reduction of Detroit, which, while it continues in possession of the enemy, will be a constant source of trouble to the whole western frontier, has of necessity imposed the task upon the state of Virginia, and of consequence makes it expedient to confer the command upon an officer of that state.

This being the case, I do not think the charge of the enterprise could have been committed to better hands than Colonel Clark's. I have not the pleasure of knowing the gentleman, but, independently of the proofs he has given of his activity and address, the unbounded confidence which I am told the western people repose in him

is a matter of vast importance; as I imagine a considerable part of his force will consist of volunteers and militia, who are not to be governed by military laws, but must be held by the ties of confidence and affection to their leader.

But in spite of the heroic efforts of Clark and the faithful support of Washington and Jefferson, it was simply impossible to procure the necessary force and Clark was compelled to forego this long-cherished project.

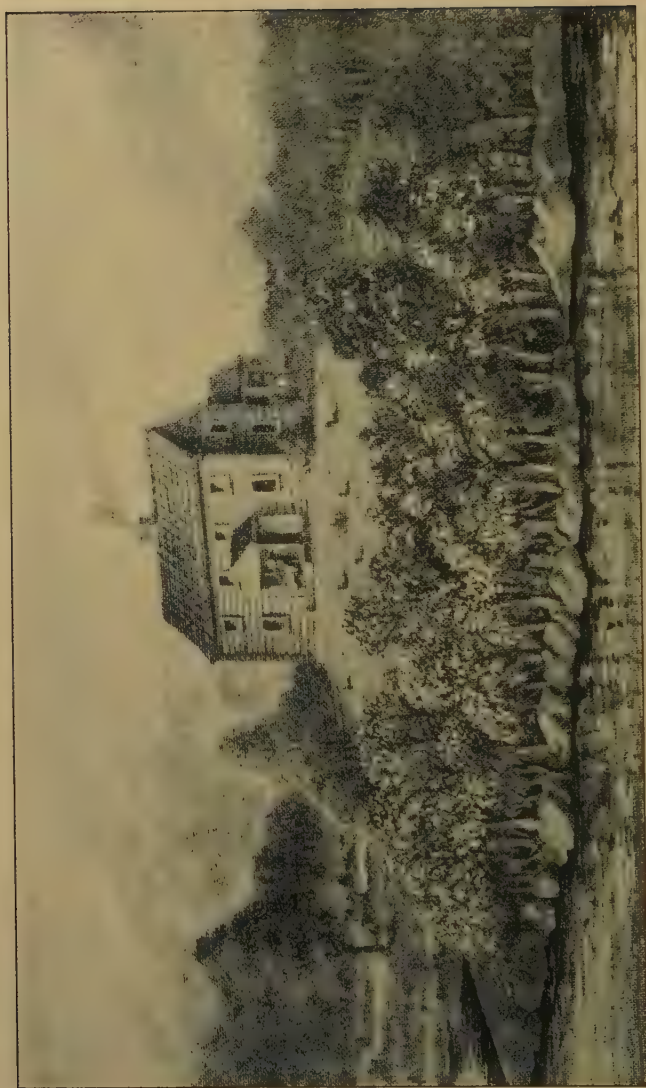
He had some connection later with two proposed enterprises which, although never carried out, led to unfavorable misunderstanding. These were the proposed Louisiana expedition and the attempt to found a colony of Americans under Spanish dominion on the western bank of the Mississippi, opposite the mouth of the Ohio.

The Louisiana expedition was inspired by the French revolutionist, Citizen Genêt, at a time when Americans were clamoring for war with Spain in order to free the French and the Americans in Louisiana from Spanish control. General Clark offered to lead an army of western frontiersmen against the Spanish, but upon President Washington's proclamation of neutrality he abandoned the expedition. His purpose was simply to make another stroke for liberty in the Mississippi valley and to open the Mississippi to western navigation, which was urgently demanded at this time, especially in Kentucky. Surely there was nothing un-American in that.

The other enterprise was a proposal which he made to Spain, to grant him a hundred-mile square of territory for the founding of a colony in her lands on the western bank of the Mississippi. But his proposal was based upon conditions in which he specified such a degree of religious and political freedom for the colonists that Spain would not agree to his project. What blame can attach to him for this?

In the midst of these hardships and discouragements, he made a consistent effort up to the end of his activities to improve the land grant which was made for the benefit of his soldiers. An area which became known as Clark's Grant was reserved by Virginia when she ceded to the Union her claims to the Northwest Territory. This was a strip of 149,000 acres on the north bank of the Ohio, comprising most of what is now Clark County and parts of Scott and Floyd counties in southern Indiana. Clark's Grant was the formal fulfillment of the assurance that Jefferson, Mason, and Wythe had given Clark at the beginning of his campaign. It is difficult to trace any actual benefit that any of these soldiers received from this grant, but Clark did his utmost to make something out of it. In 1784 he founded the little town of Clarksville, across the river from Louisville. He made this place the center of his later efforts and tried to establish an enterprising community there. He built a mill and did everything possible to advance settlements in this grant, but he did not prove successful as a town builder.

During his later years he lived part of the time with



The home of George Rogers Clark, across the Ohio River from Louisville.

his father and mother at Mulberry Hill in Kentucky, just outside of Louisville. He built a log house at Clark's Point in Clarksville, on the high bank overlooking the Falls of the Ohio, opposite the point on Corn Island where he had launched his expedition to Kaskaskia. In this cabin in southern Indiana he spent many melancholy hours. It was the only home he ever knew as his own. He was a lonely bachelor all his days.

The combination of events that beset him was overwhelming. He was not well fitted by nature to endure such outrages of fate. He did not have the calm, cool judgment and far-reaching self-control of Washington. He did not have the patient wisdom and martyr-like spirit of Lincoln. He was a crusader! His proud and sensitive spirit suffered untold agony under repression and injustice. In ill health and misfortune he became a tortured soul. Overwhelmed with disaster and neglect, discouraged by mental persecution and physical sufferings, he raged like a wounded lion in a pit. His mind and habits were seriously affected. He began drinking intemperately and for many years before his death his mind was affected. The use of intoxicating liquors was a common failing of the time. This unfortunate habit came upon Clark as the result of his restless nature, his strenuous life, his misfortunes, and his suffering. It was a result and not a cause. It was looked upon with charity in that day; certainly it can be passed with a kind indulgence now.

He received many distinguished visitors in his

home at Clark's Point. Josiah Espy visited him there in 1805 and wrote in his journal :

At the lower end of the falls is the deserted village of Clarksburgh [Clarksville] in which General Clark himself resides. I had the pleasure of seeing this celebrated warrior at his lonely cottage seated on Clark's Point. This point is situated at the upper end of the falls, particularly the lower rapid, commanding a full and delightful view of the falls, particularly the zigzag channel which is only navigated at high water. The general has not taken much pains to improve this commanding and beautiful spot, having only raised a small cabin, but it is capable of being made one of the handsomest seats in the world.

General Clark has now become frail and rather helpless, but there are the remains of great dignity and manliness in his countenance, person, and deportment, and I was struck, on seeing him, with perhaps a fancied likeness to the great and immortal Washington.

It was in this lonely cottage that his last and greatest misfortune befell him. While there alone one night in 1809, he was stricken with paralysis. He fell near the fireplace and burned one of his legs so severely that it had to be amputated. As the use of anesthetics was then unknown, he lay for two hours without flinching under the pain of the surgeon's knife. Fifes and drums were played outside the door, and the old warrior snapped his fingers, keeping time to the martial music. After this, he was utterly helpless and dependent. His sister, Mrs. Lucy Croghan, took him to her home at Locust Grove, Kentucky, a few miles from Louisville, where



The Croghan house, where Clark died. It is still used as a residence.

she cared for him the remaining nine years of his life. In his old age George Rogers Clark cried out, "I have given the United States half of the territory they possess and they suffer me to remain in poverty." He died February 13, 1818, and was buried in Revolutionary uniform with military honors in the family cemetery at Locust Grove, Kentucky. His remains were afterwards removed to Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville, where they now rest.

Six years before his death, Virginia granted him a small pension. Twenty years after his death, Virginia allowed and paid all his contested claims in full. It was a final recognition of the injustice George Rogers Clark had suffered in return for the service he had rendered.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SWORDS OF VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA has always shown high appreciation of her illustrious sons and daughters. Certainly no state or country has had more occasion for cultivating the gracious practice of expressing such appreciation.

George Rogers Clark was born and bred in Virginia and he rendered nearly all his service in her name. However, he did not make his home in Virginia after his nineteenth year. His active career was in a far-distant field. This did not lessen Virginia's appreciation of him; but absence and distance and the confusion of the times resulted in some unhappy complications, which caused him to feel that he was neglected by his native state.

Soon after Clark's triumph at Vincennes, Virginia sought to memorialize this achievement in a manner befitting the custom of the times. She presented him with a sword as a token of appreciation and esteem. The records are not clear as to just when and how Virginia made the presentation of this sword. It is certain that more than one sword was presented to this famous Virginia warrior by his native state, and there has been confusing tradition as to his reception of these memorials. The following version seems most probable and authentic.¹

¹ This is the version presented by William H. English in his *Conquest of the Northwest*.

The first sword came to him at a time when he felt deeply aggrieved because Virginia was neglecting his hard-pressed claims. He was being seriously harassed by the creditors of Virginia, for whom he was security. His property was being seized for debts which were not his, and he was making earnest complaints against Virginia because she was not repaying him. Sorely in need of payment, he felt that his claims were "as just as the Book we swear by."

It was under these circumstances that the legislature of Virginia ordered the governor to transmit to General George Rogers Clark "an elegant sword in testimony of the merit of his services."

A sword was sent to Clark with a somewhat apologetic letter from the lieutenant governor, who said: "I heartily wish a better could have been procured, but it was thought the best that could be purchased, and was bought of a gentleman who had used it but little and judged it to be elegant and costly." So the sword was evidently a second-hand sword and probably a "fancy weapon" for dress occasions.

It should be remembered that George Rogers Clark was a prime swordsman. He knew the feel of a fighting sword. He had carried a fine Toledo blade through ice and snow, through blood and fire. He had used his strong, well-tempered sword to thrust ice blocks out of the way in the awful passage of the Wabash. He had wielded it in combat against Indians and British. So it may well be believed that

when this second-hand weapon was received, he said: "When Virginia needed a sword, I gave her one. She sends me now a toy. I want bread." He snapped the sword in pieces and threw it away.

It is pleasing to reflect that notwithstanding this rebuff, Virginia made a handsome reparation, although very late in General Clark's life. After Clark was stricken with paralysis, and while he lay helpless in the home of his sister at Locust Grove, the Virginia legislature of 1812 enacted the following measure:

WHEREAS, The General Assembly of Virginia have ever entertained the highest respect for the unsullied integrity, the valor, the military enterprise and skill of General George Rogers Clark, to whom, and to his gallant regiment (aided by the justice of their cause and the favor of Heaven), the state of Virginia was indebted for the extension of her boundaries from the Atlantic to the Mississippi; and, whereas, the General Assembly have been informed that the hand of misfortune has overtaken this veteran chief, and that he, whose name was once a host, filling his friends with confidence and his foes with dismay, is now himself a victim of age and disease, and a dependent on the bounty of his relatives:

Be it therefore enacted, That the Governor of this Commonwealth shall be and is hereby authorized and requested to have manufactured, at the armory of this state, a sword, with suitable devices engraved thereon, and to cause the same to be presented to General George Rogers Clark, accompanied with an expression of the gratitude and friendly condolence of the General Assembly of Virginia.

And be it further enacted, That General George Rogers

Clark shall be and is hereby placed on the list of pensioners, and that he shall be entitled to receive annually from the public treasury one half of the full pay which he received as colonel of the Illinois regiment; that is; immediately after passage of this act, the sum of four hundred dollars, and annually thereafter, on the first day of January of every year, the sum of four hundred dollars; and the auditor of public accounts is required to issue his warrants therefor, payable out of any money in the treasury. This act shall be in force from the passage thereof.
February 20, 1812.

In accordance with this act, a magnificent sword was designed and made especially for this veteran hero. It bore ornamentations and inscriptions suitable to such a memorial. Governor James Barbour addressed to the unfortunate old warrior the following gracious and complimentary letter :

COUNCIL CHAMBER, RICHMOND

October 29, 1812

SIR:— The representatives of the good people of Virginia, convened in General Assembly, duly appreciating the gallant achievements during the Revolutionary War of yourself, and the brave regiment under your command, by which a vast extension of her empire was effected, have assigned to me the pleasant duty of announcing to you the sentiments of exalted respect they cherish for you, and the gratitude they feel at the recollection of your unsullied integrity, valor, enterprise, and skill. Having learned with sincere regret that you have been doomed to drink the cup of misfortune, they have requested me to tender you their friendly condolence. Permit me, sir, to mingle with the discharge of my official duty an expression of my own feelings.



Monument to George Rogers Clark near the grounds of the University of Virginia, at Charlottesville
The sculptor of the fine bronze group was Robert Aitken.

The history of the Revolution has always engaged my deepest attention. I have dwelt with rapture upon the distinguished part you acted in that great drama, being always convinced that it only wanted the adventitious aid of numbers to make it amongst the most splendid examples of skill and courage which any age or country has produced. I feel a conscious pride at the recollection that the name of Clark is compatriot with my own. I, too, most sincerely sympathize with you in your adverse fate, and deeply deplore that the evening of your life, whose morning was so brilliant, should be clouded with misfortune. The General Assembly of Virginia have placed among their archives a monument of their gratitude for your services, and as a small tribute of respect, have directed that four hundred dollars should be immediately paid, as also an annual sum to the same amount. I lament exceedingly that any delay should have occurred in this communication. You will readily believe me when I assure you that it arose from the tardiness of the mechanic employed in completing the sword. It is now finished and is sent herewith. I shall take pleasure in obeying your commands as to the transmission of the money to which you are entitled. You will have the goodness to acknowledge receipt of this as soon as your convenience will permit. I am, sir, with sentiments of high respect,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES BARBOUR

General George Rogers Clark, Louisville, Kentucky

N.B. — Having been disappointed in the conveyance calculated upon, for the present the sword will be retained for a new opportunity, or until I receive your commands.

A company of Virginia's distinguished men made the journey from Virginia to Kentucky to present that beautiful sword. One of these Virginians,

especially well known and remembered, was Colonel C. F. Mercer, then a rising young statesman, who won distinction later both in statesmanship and in war. He seems to have been the principal spokesman as a representative of the governor of Virginia.

The presentation was made on the front piazza of the old brick residence, which is still standing at Locust Grove, Kentucky. It was on this spot that the famous old warrior sat for hours and hours during his last days, looking northward into the great region across the Ohio which he had conquered. It was here that the Virginians presented to Clark a warrior's sword and paid him all the tributes which those southern gentlemen knew so well how to express.

As if in a dream of other days, the broken old soldier sat in his chair, almost entirely helpless, and listened to these glowing tributes. He took the beautiful sword and looked at it long and earnestly while tears streamed down his face. We may hope that in those few moments, as he listened to those words and looked at that beautiful weapon, he may have been permitted to experience again the satisfaction of the triumphs of Kaskaskia and Vincennes. When he was able to control himself, he said in a broken voice :

You have made a very handsome address, and the sword is very handsome, too. When Virginia needed a sword I gave her one. I am too old and infirm, as you see, to ever use a sword again, but I am glad that my old mother state has not entirely forgotten me, and I thank her for the honor and you for your kindness and friendly words.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

A GREAT FRIENDSHIP

HISTORY has a gracious record of some famous friendships. These are the more outstanding because they are rare. "True friendships," says Cicero, "are rarely found in such as are occupied in the pursuit of honors or public affairs."

It is gratifying to know that the lonely life of George Rogers Clark was brightened by a fine personal attachment. Thomas Jefferson, the companion of his early boyhood, was his lifelong friend. Although they seldom saw each other and never resided near each other after those first years on the Rivanna River, they maintained friendly connection and correspondence, which had historic significance in extending America's lands into the West.

Because of their wide separation and the troubles Virginia was having, Jefferson could not always help Clark, much as he would have liked to do so. But in Clark's hours of greatest gloom, the strong hand of Jefferson was extended in friendly sympathy and support to the friend of his boyhood days.

Their first official connection was in the establishment of the County of Kentucky in 1776. Jefferson, at that time an influential member of the Virginia Assembly, vigorously supported all Clark's demands upon his native state for the protection of Kentucky. It was largely through his influence that the act which created Kentucky was passed on December 7, 1776. It was his friendship for Clark and faith in him, along

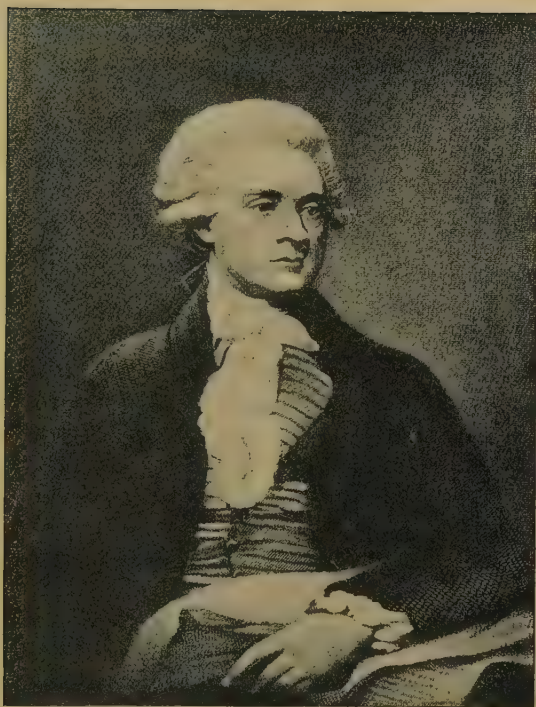
with his comprehension of the opportunities in the West, which caused Jefferson to render this timely aid.

Just one year later, when Clark was presenting his appeal to Governor Patrick Henry for authority to organize an expedition against the British in the West, Jefferson was called into council. With a breadth of vision which equaled that of Clark, he gave approval to the plan and was again a decisive influence in upholding the young pioneer. It was Jefferson who, as governor of Virginia, in 1781 commissioned Clark a brigadier general.

Unfortunately when General Clark's first serious difficulties beset him, following the Revolution, Jefferson was so bowed down under personal griefs and misfortunes that he was unable to give his friend any helpful attention. During the long illness of his wife, Jefferson excluded himself from the public in order to give her his most tender care, and for a period after her death he maintained almost solitary seclusion.

One of his first acts, when he again gave attention to public matters, was the writing of a long letter to Clark concerning his difficulties. In this letter he said :

That you have enemies you must not doubt, when you reflect that you have made yourself eminent. If you mean to escape malice, you should have confined yourself within the sleepy line of regular duty. When you transgressed this, and enterprised deeds which will hand down your name with honor to future times you made yourself a mark for malice to shoot at. Of these there is enough, both in and out of office.



Thomas Jefferson. From an old steel engraving.

During a later period of five years in which the unfortunate Clark was suffering from persecution and ill health, Jefferson was on a foreign mission as United States minister to France. Upon his return to America, he learned with deep regret of Clark's unhappy situation. Shortly afterward, while Secretary of State in Washington's cabinet, he made an effort through a mutual friend to raise Clark out of his undeserved obscurity.

The national government at this time was smarting under the disastrous defeat of the army under General Harmar at Fort Wayne, Indiana. The entire West was threatened again by the Miami Indians and their allies under the renowned Chief Little Turtle. The great need was a leader who could do what Clark had done at Kaskaskia and Vincennes. In March, 1791, Jefferson wrote to Judge Innes of Louisville, the Attorney-General of Kentucky, as follows:

Our endeavors the last year to punish our enemies have had an unfortunate issue. The Federal Council has yet to learn by experience, — what experience has long ago taught us in Virginia, — that rank and file fighting will not do against Indians. I hope this year's experiment will be made in a more auspicious form. Will it not be possible for you to bring General Clark forward? I know the greatness of his mind, and am more mortified at the cause which obscured it. Had not this unhappily taken place, there was nothing he might not have hoped; could it be surmounted, his lost ground might yet be recovered. No man alive rated him higher than I did, and would again were he to become again what I knew him. We are made

to hope he is engaged in writing the account of his expeditions Northwest of the Ohio; they will be valuable morsels of History, and will justify to the world those who have told them how great he was.

Had General Clark been able to lead armies at this time, as he did in the prime of his youth, the massacre of St. Clair, which followed shortly afterward, would doubtless have been averted. The country would not have had to wait for Mad Anthony Wayne to achieve a brilliant victory.

Judge Innes showed the letter to George Rogers Clark, who was deeply moved by this evidence of the continued esteem of his friend, the great Virginian. In humble appreciation, he shed tears of regret over his own condition, and of gratitude at Jefferson's tribute.

The correspondence between Jefferson and Clark, which had been broken for several years, was again renewed. Their letters covered a variety of important topics — personal, political, and scientific. Both men were students of natural history, and many subjects in the broad field of natural science received their attention. One of President Jefferson's last letters to General Clark concerned the packing and shipping of bones of prehistoric animals. It was largely due to the encouragement of Jefferson and of Madison that Clark labored so earnestly with his memoirs, which have indeed proved to be "valuable morsels of history."

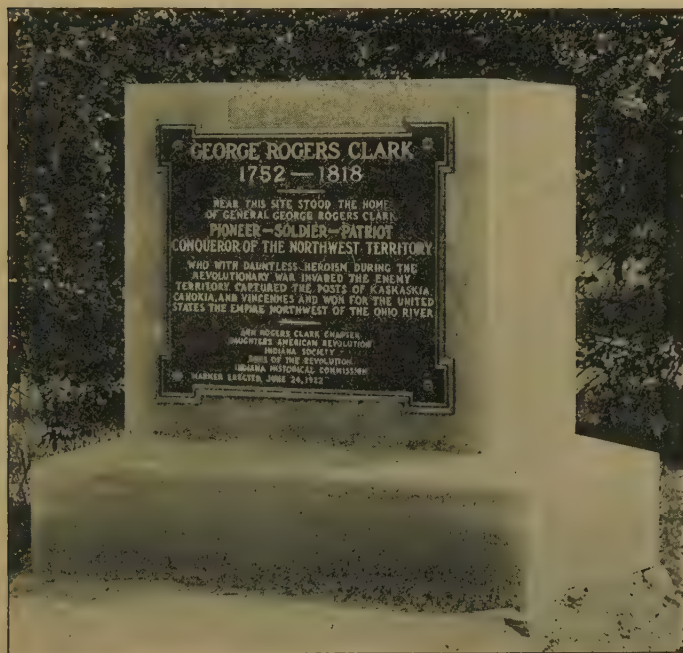
Jefferson's deep interest in the West was stimulated by Clark's knowledge and interest. For infor-

mation and advice in some matters of importance, the statesman relied upon his frontier friend as upon no other man. It is certain that the Louisiana Purchase by President Jefferson, the outstanding act of constructive statesmanship in his long and distinguished career, was in a measure the direct result of the vision which Clark helped to inspire.

It is significant that the far-famed Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Pacific Northwest, which President Jefferson commissioned in 1803, was directly influenced by the recommendation of George Rogers Clark. Twenty years before this time, they had corresponded concerning the advisability of an exploration of the West. When Jefferson as President was ready to send out an expedition for this purpose, he sought advice from his old friend on the border. General Clark himself was unable to face again the hardships of such an undertaking; but he took pride in recommending his youngest brother, William, who was accordingly appointed, with Jefferson's private secretary, Meriwether Lewis, for the adventurous enterprise.

This expedition was launched almost at the door of Clark's lonely cabin at Clarksville, Indiana, October 8, 1803. Captain William Clark and Captain Meriwether Lewis started down the Ohio, embarking just below the Falls, near where the elder brother had launched his campaign a quarter of a century before. What must have been the feelings of the broken old soldier, as he stood waving farewell to the younger brother, whose training he had greatly influenced!

His chief interest during the next three years was this expedition, and he thought constantly of the hardships which he knew his young brother was braving. On November 5, 1806, he received the explorers on their safe return to the point from which they had started. They had been to the very shores of the Pacific Ocean. This achievement was a personal triumph to the old warrior, almost as much as to the young explorer who had made such a distinguished record of courage, skill, and endurance.



A stone with bronze tablet, which marks the site of Clark's home in southern Indiana.

Shortly before the end of Jefferson's second term as President, he wrote a kind personal letter to General Clark, which contained this paragraph :

I avail myself of this occasion of recalling myself to your memory and of assuring you that time has not lessened my friendship for you. We are now both grown old. You have been enjoying in retirement the recollection of the services you have rendered your country and I am about to retire without an equal consciousness that I have not occupied places in which others could have done more good ; but in all places and times I shall wish you every happiness and salute you with great friendship and esteem.

Surely nothing in the life of this statesman and philosopher reflects more credit upon him than does the faithful and admiring regard which he maintained in good and evil report, throughout a long career, for the friend of his boyhood.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

LIFE'S TENDEREST STRING

THE storminess of George Rogers Clark's life is exceeded only by its loneliness. He was naturally affable and had many boon companions, yet the tensivity of his nature and the fervor of his spirit kept him always somewhat apart. Until recently it has been commonly believed that he had no companionship with the gentler sex. His lonely bachelorhood typified his singleness of soul. Happily, however, it is now known, through intimate family tradition,¹ that his lonely life was lightened by one golden glow of romance. Because of his silence and secrecy, his affair of the heart has been all but a closed book.

It is fitting that this romance should have begun at the high tide of his accomplishments. While he was at Kaskaskia and Cahokia, he was received with great favor by the Spanish lieutenant governor of Upper Louisiana, who had his headquarters at St. Louis just across the Mississippi from Cahokia. This noble grandee, Don Fernando de Leyba, was a great admirer of the young American and manifested unexpected friendliness toward the American cause. Moreover, he cultivated friendly relations with Clark personally. Contrary to Spanish custom, he seems to have thrown off all reserve and was most cordial in the welcome which he extended to the young colonel from Virginia. The doors of his

¹ This information is revealed in Temple Bodley's *George Rogers Clark*.

beautiful home were freely opened to Clark, who was entertained there again and again amid all the charm and culture of Old World refinement. Evidently Clark enjoyed to the full this pleasing relaxation from the strenuous cares of a rough military life.

It was in this romantic setting that he met the beautiful young Terese de Leyba. She was a sister of the governor and made her home with him. Clark was twenty-five years of age and in the prime of early manhood. He had accomplished his first great success and was thrilling with the fervor of a patriotic purpose. Under these favorable circumstances he met the governor's sister, who was talented and refined to a high degree. It naturally followed that the invincible young crusader surrendered heart and hand to the charms of the lovely señorita. It is not surprising that she looked with favor upon the young Virginian, whose gallant figure and noble bearing would have attracted favorable attention in any court of Europe.

They spent many happy hours together during the summer and autumn of 1778. It may be surmised that the attraction across the river may have had quite as much to do with Clark's long stay in the vicinity of Cahokia as his negotiations with the hostile Indians of that region. Surely we may indulge the hope that for one fair summer in a stern and troubled life he was permitted to enjoy some golden hours. Family tradition says they were betrothed.



Monument at Quincy, Illinois. Charles A. Mulligan was the scusptor of the statue, which represents the hero as a colonel of Virginia militia. The inscription on the bronze tablet reads: "George Rogers Clark, 1752-1818, the son of Virginia, the sword of Kentucky, the savior of Illinois."

As soon as he could leave Vincennes after its capture, he returned to Kaskaskia and went directly to Cahokia. No doubt his Spanish sweetheart greeted him as a conquering hero. Shortly afterward, Spain's domination was threatened by the British. Clark planned measures of defense with Don Fernando, who offered him command of both sides of the Mississippi. His duties in American dominions, however, were so immediate and pressing that he refused this added responsibility. The check which Clark and De Leyba gave at this time to the British plans on the upper Mississippi and against St. Louis was of vast importance to American interests.

Clark's visits at the governor's home in St. Louis in 1779 were probably the last that he saw of Terese de Leyba. Her brother was killed while fighting with the British some time after this, and she went to New Orleans, where she had Spanish friends but no relatives.

When Clark's financial misfortunes fell upon him and he found himself bankrupt and discredited, he restored her plighted troth. Some time later she took the veil and vows of a nun and retired to a convent in Spain, where she died in 1821, three years after the death of Clark.

The only known mention he ever made of this — his one romance — was in a letter which he wrote to his old friend, Francis Vigo, on October 1, 1811. Vigo had written him a long letter, which concluded with this kind expression :

Please, sir, to accept this plain but genuine offering from a man whom you honored once with your friendship, and who will never cease to put up prayers to Heaven that the evening of your days may be serene and happy.

Clark replied with a long and friendly letter, of which the following is the touching conclusion :

When I contemplate the glowing affection with which your letter is fraught, and only the revival of such you in the past times (ah! better times, troublous as they were) were wont to evince for me, I am so filled with correspondent feelings that I am at a loss for words to express them. How happy would I be could those sentiments of entreaty to a trustful Providence, in the conclusive part of your letter, for a serene and happy evening be realized. But that, Providence (submitting as I do with manly patience to his decrees) has long since denied me that boon. He has cut asunder the life's tenderest string.

The last sentence — “has cut asunder the life's tenderest string” — had reference to this concealed tragedy of his life, his broken betrothal with the lovely señorita of Spain. It is touching, indeed, that out of all the vivid memories of an eventful life, he should have clung longest and last to this “tender string.”

APPENDIX

It seems fitting that short biographies of two notable characters who were closely connected with George Rogers Clark should be appended to this book. Father Pierre Gibault and Francis Vigo were of vital aid to Clark in his great enterprise. Their names should always be honored for their services in connection with the early history of the Old Northwest.

FATHER PIERRE GIBAULT, PATRIOT PRIEST

THIS famous priest of Kaskaskia and Vincennes was born in Montreal, Canada, April 7, 1737. He was a French-American of the third generation. His great-grandfather, Gabriel Gibault, emigrated from Poitiers, France, to Quebec about 1663 and was married there October 30, 1667.

In early youth Pierre was taken into the Seminary at Quebec, and in this Seminary and in the Jesuit College of Quebec he was trained for missionary work among the Indians of the Northwest. The cost of his education was paid principally from the proceeds of some mission property at Cahokia on the Mississippi.

He was ordained a priest on March 19, 1768, and was shortly afterward sent to the Illinois country. His first recorded service was a baptism on September 8, 1768, at Kaskaskia, where he made his residence. In 1769 he was made Vicar-General for the Illinois region. This gave him official responsibility for an extensive territory along the Mississippi, about the Great Lakes, and in the valley of the Wabash. He also ministered for a time to Spanish settlements across the Mississippi at St. Genevieve and St. Louis, where he established the first mission at the little post then called Pain Court.

Father Gibault's first journey to Vincennes was in the winter of 1769-70. The hardships of a pioneer priest at this time can scarcely be fully appreciated. He had to travel long distances through the forests to

scattered hostile settlements, subject always to terrible hardships and deadly perils, while he ministered to Indians as well as whites. Father Gibault suffered from serious attacks of fever and ague, before he became fully acclimated to his strenuous work. In his travels, he carried a gun and two pistols. These weapons were a part of the traveling equipment of a frontier priest, and he was expected to be expert in their use. His path was a thorny and bloody one.

At the time of the coming of Father Gibault to Vincennes, this little post had fallen into a deplorable state of wickedness. The mission had been without the regular services of a priest practically ever since the British superseded the French in 1763. The entire field over which Father Gibault assumed jurisdiction as a hopeful young Vicar-General, was in a state of confusion and disruption, and Vincennes seems to have been the worst of all.

In a letter to Bishop Briand at Quebec, Father Gibault reported his reception there in 1770 as follows :

On my arrival, all crowded down to the banks of the Wabash River to receive me, some fell on their knees, unable to speak, others could speak only in sobs ; some cried out : " Father, save us, we are almost in hell " ; others said : " God has not then yet abandoned us, for He has sent you to us to make us do penance for our sins. Oh, sir, why did you not come sooner ; my poor wife, my dear father, my dear mother, my poor child, would not have died without the sacraments."

He labored with such zeal among his parishioners that a new church was erected at Vincennes soon after his arrival and religious practices were again restored among the people. He traveled much, visiting his different missions.

By his vigorous and devoted service for a period of ten years, he had become, at the time of the American invasion by George Rogers Clark, a powerful influence among all the Creoles in this region. These people looked up to their beloved priest for counsel and guidance, not only in all things spiritual but indeed in most of their important affairs of life. It was natural that the faithful priest should be the first to approach the victorious Big Knives, after the taking of Kaskaskia on July 4, 1778. Father Gibault came to Colonel Clark with a humble petition that his people be permitted to meet at the church to prepare themselves for the separation that they supposed was coming.

Upon assurance from Colonel Clark that he came to extend political liberty and religious tolerance to the Creoles, Father Gibault immediately cast his powerful influence on behalf of the Americans, and from that time forth he supported the Revolutionary cause. He had visited Quebec shortly before the coming of Clark, and it seems that what he had learned there concerning the strife between Great Britain and the colonies, had caused him to become rather favorable to the American cause. It needed only the whole-hearted assurance of the diplomatic young American to "complete his happiness." It

was to help Clark's undertaking that he journeyed to Vincennes with Dr. Jean Baptiste Lafont in August, 1778, and used his influence to persuade the citizens to transfer their allegiance from Great Britain to the United States. Clark launched his desperate march from Kaskaskia to Vincennes on February 5, 1779, with the blessings of Father Gibault.

The valuable aid which this loyal priest rendered the American cause brought upon him bitter hostility and violent attacks from Governor Hamilton. These attacks persisted in later years and, because of them, Father Gibault was the unfortunate object of persecution in ecclesiastical circles, largely through English influence. He made a pathetic defense in a letter of June 6, 1786, on the occasion of receiving a summons to Quebec to answer charges against him. In this letter he said :

To all the pains and hardships that I have undergone in my different journeys to most distant points, winter and summer, attending so many villages in Illinois, distant from each other, in all weathers, night and day, snow or rain, wind, storm or fog on the Mississippi, so that I never slept four nights in a year in my own bed, never hesitating to start at a moment's notice, whether sick or well — how can a priest who sacrifices himself in this way, with no other view than God's glory and the salvation of his neighbor, with no pecuniary reward, almost always ill-fed, unable to attend to both spiritual and temporal needs — how, I say, can you know such a priest zealous to fulfill the duties of his holy ministry, careful to watch over his flock, instruct them in the most important tenets of reli-

gion, instruct the young unceasingly and untiringly not only in Christian doctrine but teaching the boys to read and write, as one who gives scandal and is addicted to intoxication.

He strove vigorously against the liquor trade, which was a powerful enemy of his mission, and even refused the sacraments to many of his parishioners, especially among the Indians, because of disorders which were committed on account of intoxication.

After the Revolutionary War was over and the Catholic Church in the United States became independent of the diocese of London, Father Gibault continued his responsibility as Vicar-General of the Northwest Territory for several years, notwithstanding some confusion of jurisdiction. His last mission in the United States was at Cahokia, from which he withdrew to Spanish territory west of the Mississippi in 1791.

He was then feeling the infirmities of age and ill health. The pressure of poverty caused him to address a petition to General St. Clair, governor of the Northwest Territory in 1790, in which he called attention to the sacrifices he had made for the support of George Rogers Clark. He asked compensation to the amount of 7800 livres (about \$1500). In this petition he said:

The want of seven thousand eight hundred livres, of the non-payment of which the American notes had deprived him the use, has obliged him to sell the two good slaves who would now be the support of his old age. For

the want of them he now finds himself dependent upon the public, who, although well served, are very rarely led to keep their promises, except that part who, employing their time in such service, are supported by the secular power, that is to say, on the civil government.

The love of country and liberty has also led your memorialist to reject all of the advantages offered him by the Spanish governor; and he endeavored by every means in his power, by exertions and exhortations, and by letters to the principal inhabitants, to retain every person in the dominion of the United States in expectation of better times; and giving them to understand that our lives and property, having been employed twelve years in the aggrandizement and preservation of the United States, would at last receive acknowledgment, and be compensated by the enlightened and upright ministers, who sooner or later would come to examine into and relieve our situation.

We begin to see the accomplishment of these hopes under the happy government of Your Excellency, and as your memorialist has every reason to believe, from proofs which would be too long to explain here, you have been one of the number who have been most forward in risking their lives and their fortunes for their country.

He also hopes that this demand will be listened to favorably. It is this. The missionaries, like lords, have at all times possessed two tracts of land near this village, — one, three acres in front, which produces but little hay, three fourths being useless by a great morass; the other, of two acres in front, which may be cultivated, and which the memorialist will have cultivated with care, and proposes to have a dwelling erected on it, with a yard and orchard, in case his claim is accepted.

This humble petition for a bit of ground which he might cultivate for the comfort of his old age, out of the vast domain which he had helped to win, was

not granted. There seems to have been some confusion as to the rightful authority to make such a grant. Some protest was made against this proposal to convey church property to an individual for his personal possession.

After this rebuff and disappointment Father Gibault withdrew from the territory of the United States and in 1791 went across the Mississippi into Spanish dominions. He made his home at New Madrid, a new settlement which had been established on the Mississippi mainly by Americans in what is now southern Missouri. Here he practically faded out of history.

The best information that can be obtained seems to establish the fact that he spent his last days at New Madrid in poverty and obscurity and that he died in 1804. His burial place is unknown, and no monument has been erected to his memory. The old parish records of New Madrid were destroyed by fire during the Civil War, so that no written records of his last days there are available. There is a report that his remains were taken to Quebec for burial, but a more reasonable tradition holds that he was buried in an obscure cemetery on the outskirts of New Madrid, near the Mississippi River, and that the soil of this cemetery was later washed away by floods of the Mississippi.

FRANCIS VIGO

FRANCIS VIGO was an extraordinary character, who might be called a world citizen. He was born in 1747 on the island of Sardinia in the Mediterranean. He left home when a small boy and went to Spain, where he worked at common labor as a muleteer. He volunteered for service in the Spanish army and fought both in the old country and in the new. He served in the island of Cuba and later at New Orleans, the capital of the Spanish province of Louisiana. Here at the age of twenty-five he left military service and went up the Mississippi River to the little station of Pain Court, which afterwards became St. Louis.

Vigo engaged in fur trading and had a secret partnership with Fernando de Leyba, the Spanish lieutenant governor of St. Louis. His principal headquarters were in St. Louis, where he was a general merchant, but he had branches extending throughout that region on the Mississippi and far across Illinois along the Wabash. His principal branch posts were at Cahokia, Kaskaskia, and Vincennes.

Although almost illiterate, Vigo possessed business genius and was very successful in trading with trappers and Indians. At the time of his first connection with George Rogers Clark at Cahokia and Kaskaskia in 1778, he was a man of considerable wealth, and he had influence on both sides of the Mississippi. He was trusted implicitly by the Creoles

in all matters of credit and finance, and he was liked and respected generally by both the French and the Spanish inhabitants. It was probably due, in part, to his friendly influence that Clark was received on such favorable terms by the Spanish lieutenant governor of St. Louis.

Vigo was a close friend and a warm supporter of Father Gibault. He encouraged the priest in his missions and aided him in the building of churches. It was through Vigo that Father Gibault established the first church at St. Louis.

Clark's first definite information concerning the taking of Vincennes by General Hamilton came through Francis Vigo, who made a business trip from Kaskaskia to Vincennes. He made the trip, partly at least, on the persuasion of Clark for the purpose of procuring ammunition and provisions for Captain Helm at Fort Sackville. It has been reported also that he carried a letter from Clark to Helm. He left Kaskaskia, December 18, 1778, traveling on horseback. When he arrived within a few miles of Vincennes west of the Wabash River on December 24th, he was surprised and captured by a band of Indians, who took him at once to the fort. Tradition says that he resisted his captors with such dignity that they did not search him. Then while the Indians were taking him across the Wabash in a canoe, he succeeded in chewing up Clark's letter and dropping it by bits into the Wabash River, thus avoiding its seizure by Hamilton, who would no doubt have hanged Vigo as a spy.

Hamilton made him a prisoner in the fort. His horse, his pistols, and other property were taken from him, amounting, he claimed, to the value of five hundred dollars. He was kept a prisoner in Vincennes for three weeks, but was allowed a good deal of freedom, so that he acquired valuable information about the situation there. He demanded that Hamilton release him, saying that he was not an American but a Spaniard; that he had come on business and that his business interests required his return to St. Louis. Hamilton finally released him the latter part of January on the condition that he would do nothing to injure the British cause "during his journey home." He agreed to this and went straight back to Kaskaskia. Then having reached his home and having kept his promise to the letter, he went directly to Clark on the 29th of January and gave him full information concerning the situation at Vincennes. It was this information that made Clark determine to attack Vincennes immediately.

Vigo was an invaluable aid in helping Clark procure supplies for the campaign. He accepted Virginia's paper money and bills of credit and persuaded other merchants and citizens of Kaskaskia and Cahokia to do the same. He accepted four drafts upon Virginia in payment for supplies, totaling \$11,387.40. These drafts were never paid by Virginia. Vigo cashed two of them for twenty per cent of their face value. It is reported that he destroyed one of them, for a rather small amount, in a fit of passion and disappointment. The largest

of these claims, amounting to \$8616, he vigorously urged at various times during the rest of his life.

After the Revolution Vigo moved from St. Louis to Vincennes and made his home there for the remainder of his life. Physically, he was a small man with sharp features. Although he had an intelligent mind, he never learned to read or write very well and he always spoke a somewhat broken English. He married Miss Shannon of Vincennes, who lived only a short time and had no children. He never married again. He became an influential and honored citizen of Vincennes and built a beautiful home there. In this home he entertained William Henry Harrison, the first governor of Indiana Territory, while the Harrison home at Grouseland was being constructed.

For most of his life, Francis Vigo was a devout and active Catholic. He served as a trustee of the Catholic Church of Vincennes from 1807 to 1822. He was a strong friend and vigorous supporter of many priests of Vincennes, helping greatly in material affairs of the church. His name appears frequently in church registers as godfather, at baptisms, and as a witness at wedding ceremonies.

He was seriously hampered financially because of the losses which he incurred for the provisions he generously furnished Clark. Notwithstanding this, he seems to have had some success in business at Vincennes and was at one time a large landowner. Most of his property was taken from him, however, partly through fraudulent land schemes, but mainly

through losses which he suffered in partnership with the Miami Fur Company. His last years were spent in poverty, from which he could not recover because his just claims were never paid during his life. He was heard to say, "I guess the Lord has forgotten me." He certainly had reason to feel that his fellow countrymen, to whom he had rendered such signal service, were ungrateful.

He lived part of the time in his old age at the home of Betsy La Plante, whom he had reared from childhood. It is not certain whether he died at her home or at the home of Francis Vigo McKee, who was the son of his wife's sister. Francis Vigo McKee and his brother, Archibald McKee, were made his heirs by will in 1834. Vigo County in Indiana was named for him, and in a grand celebration at Terre Haute, the county seat, July 4, 1834, he was welcomed with honor and escorted in a fine carriage at the head of the parade. As an expression of his gratitude for the honors shown him, he provided in his will that a bell for the Vigo County Court House at Terre Haute should be purchased out of his estate, if the government ever paid his claims.

He was ever a stanch friend of George Rogers Clark. The following touching letter from him to Clark was written at Vincennes, July 15, 1811 :

SIR :

Permit an old man who has witnessed your exertions in behalf of your country in its revolutionary struggles to address you at the present moment. When viewing the events which have succeeded those important times, I

often thought that I had reasons to lament that the meritorious services of the best patriots of those days were too easily forgotten and almost taxed my adopted Country with ingratitude. But when I saw that on a late occasion, on the fourth of July last, the Citizens of Jefferson County and vicinity from a spontaneous impulse of gratitude and esteem had paid an unfeigned tribute to the Veteran to whose skill and valor America and Kentucky owe so much, I then repelled the unwelcome idea of national ingratitude and my sentiments chimed in unison with those of the worthy Citizens of Kentucky towards the saviour of this once distressed Country. Deprived of the pleasure of a personal attendance on that day, I took this method of manifesting to you, sir, that I participated in the general sentiments.

Please, sir, to accept this plain but genuine offering from a man whom you honored once with your friendship, and who will never cease to put up prayers to Heaven that the evening of your days may be serene and happy.

I have the honor to be, Sir, Your most obed. Sert.

VIGO

Clark's appreciation of this message was expressed in a letter from Locust Grove, Kentucky, August 1, 1811. He said in part :

DEAR SIR :

A letter from a man who has always occupied a distinguished place in my affection and esteem must insure the warmest and most cordial reception — an affection, the result not so much of being associates in the placid stream of tranquillity and the benign sunshine of peace, as companions amidst the din of war and those struggles when the indefatigable exertion of every muscle and nerve was demanded.

Vigo made a pathetic appeal to Congress in a petition in 1834, when he was eighty-seven years of age, asking that he be reimbursed for the money he had lost in aiding Clark. This claim was unheeded at the time and he died in utter dependence, although it is to be gratefully remembered that he was kindly treated and well cared for in his last days. The end came March 22, 1836.

While his petition was pending before Congress, William Henry Harrison wrote the following remarkable tribute :

I have been acquainted with Colo. Francis Vigo of Vincennes for thirty-nine years; and during the thirteen years that I was the Governor of Indiana, I lived in the same town with him, and upon terms of the most intimate friendship. I have often heard him speak of the draft which had been given him by General Clark for supplies furnished to the army, and that it had never been paid. . . . With respect to the credibility of Colo. Vigo's statement, I solemnly declare, that I believe him utterly incapable of making a misrepresentation of the facts, however great may be his interest in the matter, and I am also confident that there are more respectable persons in Indiana who would become the guarantees of his integrity, than could be induced to lay under a similar responsibility for any other person. His whole life, as long as his circumstances were prosperous, was spent in acts of kindness and benevolence to individuals, and his public spirit and attachment to the Institution of our Country proverbial.

Andrew Gardner, who was an undertaker in a modest way in those days, wheeled the body of Francis Vigo to the grave in an odd little cart which

is still preserved. He filed a bill of twenty dollars for this service, including the box and coffin. This funeral expense was not paid until forty years later, when the claims of Francis Vigo were at last allowed by Congress through the Court of Claims in 1876. The principal of Vigo's claim amounted to \$8616, upon which interest had accrued in the sum of \$41,282.60. Thus the total amount which went to his estate forty years after his death was \$49,898.60.

After the allowance of this claim, a bell was placed in the steeple especially designed for it in the Vigo County Court House, according to the provisions of Francis Vigo's will. For long years the Vigo Bell at Terre Haute tolled a kindly remembrance of this patriotic and high-souled man, who had contributed much toward making this rich region of the Wabash forever American.

PRONUNCIATION OF DIFFICULT NAMES

Audubon, ô'dôô-bôn
 Barbour, bār'bēr
 Buckongehelas, bŭk-ôn'gê-
 hē'làs
 Burgoyne, bŭr-goin'
 Cahokia, ká-hô'kĩ-á
 Chillicothe, chĩl-ĩ-kôth'ê
 De Leyba, dê lā'bá
 Genêt, zhê-ně'
 Gibault, zhê-bô'
 Iroquois, ır'ô-kwoi
 Kaskaskia, kās-kās'kĩ-á
 Lajes, lâ-zhā'
 La Prairie du Rocher, lâ
 prā'rě dôô-rô-shě'
 Menomine, mē-nôm'ĩ-nē
 Miami, mĩ-ām'ĩ
 Mississinnewa, mĩs'ĩs-ĩ-
 nā-wā

Ouiatanon, wē-ă'tá-nôn
 Pain Court, paŋ cōr
 Piankishaw, pĩ-ăn'kē-
 shā
 Piqua, pĩk'wá
 Pottawatomie, pôt'á-wôt'-
 ô-mĩ
 Puan, pōō-ăn'
 Saguina, sã'gĩ-nā
 Scioto, sĩ-ô'tō
 Tecumseh, tē-kŭm'sē
 Thames, tēmz
 Tippecanoe, tĩp'ê-ká-
 nōō'
 Transylvania, trăn'sĩl-vā'-
 nĩ-á
 Vigo, vē'gō
 Vincennes, vĩn-sěnz'
 Wythe, wĩth

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